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THE

EPIDEMICS

OF THE

MIDDLE AGES:

FROM THE GERMAN OF

I. F. C. HECKER, M.D.

PROFESSOR AT FREDERICK WILLIAM'S UNIVERSITY AT BERLIN,
AND MEMBER OF VARIOUS LEARNED SOCIETIES IN BERLIN, BONN,
COPENHAGEN, ERLANGEN, HANAU, LONDON, LYONS, METZ,
NAPLES, NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA, AND ZURICH.

TRANSLATED BY

B. G. BABINGTON, M.D. F.R.S.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, GILBERT, & PIPER,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1835.

DR. BABINGTON'S Translation of " HECKER'S BLAC DEATH," having passed into the hands of the present Proprieto they beg to announce that the "DANCING MANIA," by t same Author, is also now published. These Works, together wi the " ENGLISH SWEATING SICKNESS," which will appe with as little delay as possible, form a complete Series of the pri cipal Epidemics of the Middle Ages; and thus an authentic Accou of the greatest natural calamities on record is presented to the pr fessional and general reader, and an important desideratum medical history supplied.

PATERNOSTER-ROW,
Feb. 1835.

No. I.

THE BLACK DEATH

IN THE

FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

Med 15403.2

ERRATA.

Page 35,	*line* 3,	omit *to*
— 72,	— 4,	for *inumerable*, read *innumerable.*
— 81,	— 9,	note, for *begun*, read *began.*
— 116,	— 19,	for *civitaten*, read *civitatem.*
— 122,	— 16,	insert *as.*
— 124,	— 5,	for *sooth*, read *smooth.*
— 131,	The stops in the last sentence should be commas.	
— 179,	*line* 4,	inverted double commas wanting at the beginning and end.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In reading Dr. Hecker's account of the Black Death which destroyed so large a portion of the human race in the fourteenth century, I was struck, not only with the peculiarity of the Author's views, but also with the interesting nature of the facts which he has collected. Some of these have never before been made generally known, while others have passed out of mind, being effaced from our memories by subsequent events of a similar kind, which, though really of less magnitude and importance, have, in the perspective of time, appeared greater, because they have occurred nearer to our own days.

Dreadful as was the pestilence here described, and in few countries more so than in England, our modern historians only slightly allude to its visitation: — Hume

deems a single paragraph sufficient to devote to its notice, and Henry and Rapin are equally brief.

It may not then be unacceptable to the medical, or even to the general reader, to receive an authentic and somewhat detailed account of one of the greatest natural calamities that ever afflicted the human race.

My chief motive, however, for translating this small work, and at this particular period, has been a desire that, in the study of the causes which have produced and propagated general pestilences, and of the moral effects by which they have been followed, the most enlarged views should be taken. The contagionist and the anti-contagionist may each find ample support for his belief in particular cases; but in the construction of a theory sufficiently comprehensive to explain throughout the origin and dissemination of universal disease, we shall not only perceive the insufficiency of either doctrine, taken singly, but after admitting the combined influence of both,

shall even then find our views too narrow, and be compelled, in our endeavours to explain the facts, to acknowledge the existence of unknown powers, wholly unconnected either with communication by contact or atmospheric contamination.

I by no means wish it to be understood, that I have adopted the author's views respecting astral and telluric influences, the former of which, at least, I had supposed to have been, with alchemy and magic, long since consigned to oblivion; much less am I prepared to accede to his notion, or rather an ancient notion derived from the East and revived by him, of an organic life in the system of the universe. We are constantly furnished with proofs, that that which affects life is not itself alive; and whether we look to the earth for exhalations, to the air for electrical phenomena, to the heavenly bodies for an influence over our planet, or to all these causes combined, for the formation of some unknown principle noxious to animal existence, still, if we found our

reasoning on ascertained facts, we can perceive nothing throughout this vast field for physical research which is not evidently governed by the laws of inert matter, nothing which resembles the regular succession of birth, growth, decay, death, and regeneration, observable in organized beings. To assume, therefore, causes of whose existence we have no proof, in order to account for effects which, after all, they do not explain, is making no real advance in knowledge, and can scarcely be considered otherwise than an indirect method of confessing our ignorance.

Still, however, I regard the author's opinions, illustrated as they are by a series of interesting facts diligently collected from authentic sources, as, at least, worthy of examination before we reject them, and valuable, as furnishing extensive data on which to build new theories.

I have another, perhaps I may be allowed to say a better, motive for laying before my countrymen this narrative of the sufferings

of past ages,—that by comparing them with those of our own time, we may be made the more sensible how lightly the chastening hand of Providence has fallen on the present generation, and how much reason, therefore, we have to feel grateful for the mercy shewn us.

The publication has, with this view, been purposely somewhat delayed, in order that it might appear at a moment when it is to be presumed that men's thoughts will be especially directed to the approaching hour of public thanksgiving, and when a knowledge of that which they have escaped, as well as of that which they have suffered, may tend to heighten their devotional feelings on that solemn occasion.

When we learn that, in the fourteenth century, one quarter, at least, of the population of the old world was swept away in the short space of four years, and that some countries, England among the rest, lost more than double that proportion of their inhabitants in the course of a few months,

we may well congratulate ourselves that our visitation has not been like theirs, and shall not justly merit ridicule, if we offer our humble thanks to the "Creator and Preserver of all mankind" for our deliverance.

Nor would it disgrace our feelings, if, in expiation of the abuse and obloquy not long since so lavishly bestowed by the public, we should entertain some slight sense of gratitude towards those members of the community, who were engaged, at the risk of their lives and the sacrifice of their personal interests, in endeavouring to arrest the progress of the evil, and to mitigate the sufferings of their fellow men.

I have added, at the close of the Appendix, some extracts from a scarce little work in black letter, called "A Boke or Counseill against the Disease commonly called the Sweate or Sweatyng Sicknesse," published by Caius in 1552. This was written three years before his Latin treatise on the same subject, and is so quaint, and, at the same

time, so illustrative of the opinions of his day, and even of those of the fourteenth century, on the causes of universal diseases, that the passages which I have quoted will not fail to afford some amusement as well as instruction. If I have been tempted to reprint more of this curious production than was necessary to my primary object, it has been from a belief that it would be generally acceptable to the reader to gather some particulars regarding the mode of living in the sixteenth century, and to observe the author's animadversions on the degeneracy and credulity of the age in which he lived. His advice on the choice of a medical attendant cannot be too strongly recommended, at least *by a physician;* and his warning against quackery, particularly the quackery of *painters,* who "scorne (*quære* score ?) you behind your backs with their medicines, so filthy that I am ashamed to name them," seems quite prophetic.

In conclusion, I beg to acknowledge the obligation which I owe to my friend Mr.

H. E. Lloyd, whose intimate acquaintance with the German language and literature will, I hope, be received as a sufficient pledge that no very important errors remain in a translation which he has kindly revised.

PREFACE.

We here find an important page of the history of the world laid open to our view. It treats of a convulsion of the human race, unequalled in violence and extent. It speaks of incredible disasters, of despair and unbridled demoniacal passions. It shews us the abyss of general licentiousness, in consequence of an universal pestilence, which extended from China to Iceland and Greenland.

The inducement to unveil this image of an age, long since gone by, is evident. A new pestilence has attained almost an equal extent, and though less formidable, has partly produced, partly indicated, similar phenomena. Its causes and its diffusion over Asia and Europe, call on us to take a comprehensive view of it, because it leads to an insight into the organism of the world, in

which the sum of organic life is subject to the great powers of Nature. Now, human knowledge is not yet sufficiently advanced, to discover the connexion between the processes which occur above, and those which occur below, the surface of the earth, or even fully to explore the laws of nature, an acquaintance with which would be required, far less to apply them to great phenomena, in which one spring sets a thousand others in motion.

On this side, therefore, such a point of view is not to be found, if we would not lose ourselves in the wilderness of conjectures, of which the world is already too full: but it may be found in the ample and productive field of historical research.

History—that mirror of human life in all its bearings, offers, even for general pestilences, an inexhaustible, though scarcely explored, mine of facts; here too it asserts its dignity, as the philosophy of reality delighting in truth.

It is conformable to its spirit to conceive

general pestilences as events affecting the whole world, to explain their occurrences by the comparison of what is similar, by which the facts speak for themselves, because they appear to have proceeded from the higher laws which govern the progression of the existence of mankind. A cosmical origin and convulsive excitement, productive of the most important consequences among the nations subject to them, are the most striking features to which history points in all general pestilences. The latter, however, assume very different forms, as well in their attacks on the general organism, as in their diffusion; and in this respect a development from form to form, in the course of centuries, is manifest, so that the history of the world is divided into grand periods in which positively defined pestilences prevailed. As far as our chronicles extend, more or less certain information can be obtained respecting them.

But this part of medical history, which has such a manifold and powerful influence

over the history of the world, is yet in its infancy. For the honor of that science which should everywhere guide the actions of mankind, we are induced to express a wish, that it may find room to flourish amidst the rank vegetation with which the field of German medical science is unhappily encumbered.

THE BLACK DEATH.

CHAPTER I.

General Observations.

That Omnipotence which has called the world with all its living creatures into one animated being, especially reveals himself in the desolation of great pestilences. The powers of creation come into violent collision; the sultry dryness of the atmosphere; the subterraneous thunders; the mist of overflowing waters, are the harbingers of destruction. Nature is not satisfied with the ordinary alternations of life and death, and the Destroying Angel waves over man and beast his flaming sword.

These revolutions are performed in vast cycles, which the spirit of man, limited as

it is, to a narrow circle of perception, is unable to explore. They are, however, greater terrestrial events than any of those which proceed from the discord, the distress or the passions of nations. By annihilations they awaken new life; and when the tumult above and below the earth is past, nature is renovated, and the mind awakens from torpor and depression to the consciousness of an intellectual existence.

Were it in any degree within the power of human research to draw up, in a vivid and connected form, an historical sketch of such mighty events, after the manner of the historians of wars and battles, and the migrations of nations, we might then arrive at clear views with respect to the mental development of the human race, and the ways of Providence would be more plainly discernible. It would then be demonstrable, that the mind of nations is deeply affected by the destructive conflict of the powers of nature, and that great disasters lead to striking changes in general civilization. For

all that exists in man, whether good or evil, is rendered conspicuous by the presence of great danger. His inmost feelings are roused — the thought of self-preservation masters his spirit—self denial is put to severe proof, and wherever darkness and barbarism prevail, there the affrighted mortal flies to the idols of his superstition, and all laws, human and divine, are criminally violated.

In conformity with a general law of nature, such a state of excitement, brings about a change, beneficial or detrimental, according to circumstances, so that nations either attain a higher degree of moral worth, or sink deeper in ignorance and vice. All this, however, takes place upon a much grander scale than through the ordinary vicissitudes of war and peace, or the rise and fall of empires, because the powers of nature themselves produce plagues, and subjugate the human will, which, in the contentions of nations, alone predominates.

CHAPTER II.

The Disease.

The most memorable example of what has been advanced, is afforded by a great pestilence of the fourteenth century, which desolated Asia, Europe, and Africa, and of which the people yet preserve the remembrance in gloomy traditions. It was an oriental plague, marked by inflammatory boils and tumors of the glands, such as break out in no other febrile disease. On account of these inflammatory boils, and from the black spots, indicatory of a putrid decomposition, which appeared upon the skin, it was called in Germany and in the northern kingdoms of Europe, *the Black Death*, and in Italy, la Mortalega Grande, *the Great Mortality.**

* La Mortalega Grande. *Matth. de Griffonibus.* Muratori. Script. rer. Italicar. T. XVIII. p. 167. D.

Few testimonies are presented to us respecting its symptoms and its course, yet these are sufficient to throw light upon the form of the malady, and they are worthy of credence, from their coincidence with the signs of the same disease in modern times.

The imperial writer, Kantakusenos,* whose own son, Andronikus, died of this

They were called by others Anguinalgia. *Andr. Gratiol.* Discorso di peste. Venet. 1576, 4to. Swedish: *Diger-döden. Loccenii* Histor. Suecan L. III. p. 104.—Danish: *den sorte Dod. Pontan.* Rer. danicar Histor. L. VIII. p. 476.—Amstelod: 1631, fol. Icelandic: *Svatur Daudi.* Saabye, Tagebuch in Grönland. Introduction XVIII. *Mansa,* de Epidemiis maxime momorabilibus, quae in Dania grassatae sunt, &c. Part. I. p. 12. Havniae, 1831, 8.—In Westphalia the name of *de groete Doet* was prevalent. Meibom.

* *Joann Cantacuzen* Historiar, L. IV. c. 8. Ed. Paris. p. 730. 5. The ex-emperor has indeed copied some passages from Thucydides, as *Sprengel* justly observes, (Appendix to the Geschichte der Medicin. Vol. I. H. I. S. 73.) though this was most probably only for the sake of rounding a period. This is no detriment to his credibility, because his statements accord with the other accounts.

plague in Constantinople, notices great imposthumes* of the thighs and arms of those affected, which, when opened, afforded relief by the discharge of an offensive matter. Buboes, which are the infallible signs of the oriental plague, are thus plainly indicated, for he makes separate mention of smaller boils on the arms and in the face, as also in other parts of the body, and clearly distinguishes these from the blisters,† which are no less produced by plague in all its forms. In many cases, black spots§ broke out all over the body, either single, or united and confluent.

These symptoms were not all found in every case. In many, one alone was sufficient to cause death, while some patients recovered, contrary to expectation, though afflicted with all. Symptoms of cephalic affection were frequent; many patients became stupified and fell into a deep sleep, losing

* Αποςάσεις μεγάλαι.

† Μελαίναι φλυχτίδες.

§ ὥσπερ ςιγματα μέλανα.

also their speech from palsy of the tongue; others remained sleepless and without rest. The fauces and tongue were black, and as if suffused with blood; no beverage would assuage their burning thirst, so that their sufferings continued without alleviation until terminated by death, which many in their despair accelerated with their own hands. Contagion was evident, for attendants caught the disease of their relations and friends, and many houses in the capital were bereft even of their last inhabitant. Thus far the ordinary circumstances only of the oriental plague occurred. Still deeper sufferings, however, were connected with this pestilence, such as have not been felt at other times; the organs of respiration were seized with a putrid inflammation; a violent pain in the chest attacked the patient; blood was expectorated, and the breath diffused a pestiferous odour.

In the West, the following were the predominating symptoms on the eruption

of this disease.* An ardent fever, accompanied by an evacuation of blood, proved fatal in the first three days. It appears that buboes and inflammatory boils did not at first come out at all, but that the disease, in the form of carbuncular *(anthraxartigen)* affection of the lungs, effected the destruction of life before the other symptoms were developed.

Thus did the plague rage in Avignon for six or eight weeks, and the pestilential breath of the sick, who expectorated blood, caused a terrible contagion far and near; for even the vicinity of those who had fallen ill of plague was certain death;§ so that parents abandoned their infected children, and all the ties of kindred were dissolved. After this period, buboes

* *Guidon de Cauliaco* Chirurgia. Tract 11. c. 5. p. 113. Ed. Lugdun, 1572.

§ Et fuit tantae contagiositatis specialiter quae fuit cum sputo sanguinis, quod non solum morando, sed etiam inspiciendo unus recipiebat ab alio: intantum quod gentes moriebantur sine servitoribus,

in the axilla and in the groin, and inflammatory boils all over the body, made their appearance; but it was not until seven months afterwards that some patients recovered with matured buboes, as in the ordinary milder form of plague.

Such is the report of the courageous Guy de Chauliac, who vindicated the honor of medicine, by bidding defiance to danger; boldly and constantly assisting the affected, and disdaining the excuse of his colleagues, who held the Arabian notion, that medical aid was unavailing, and that the contagion justified flight. He saw the plague twice in Avignon, first in the year 1348, from January to August, and then twelve years later, in the autumn, when it returned from Germany, and for nine months spread general distress and terror. The first time it raged chiefly among the poor, but in the

et sepeliebantur sine sacerdotibus, pater non visitabat filium, nec filius patrem: charitas erat mortua, spes prostrata.

year 1360, more among the higher classes. It now also destroyed a great many children, whom it had formerly spared, and but few women.

The like was seen in Egypt.* Here also inflammation of the lungs was predominant, and destroyed quickly and infallibly, with burning heat and expectoration of blood. Here too the breath of the sick spread a deadly contagion, and human aid was as vain as it was destructive to those who approached the infected.

Boccacio, who was an eye-witness of its incredible fatality in Florence, the seat of the revival of science, gives a more lively description of the attack of the disease than his non-medical contemporaries.§

It commenced here, not as in the East, with bleeding at the nose, a sure sign

* *Deguignes*, Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Moguls, &c. Tom. IV. Paris 1758. 4to. p. 226.

§ Decameron Giorn. I. Introd.

of inevitable death; but there took place at the beginning, both in men and women, tumours in the groin and in the axilla, varying in circumference up to the size of an apple or an egg, and called by the people, pest-boils (gavoccioli). Then there appeared similar tumours indiscriminately over all parts of the body, and black or blue spots came out on the arms or thighs, or on other parts, either single and large, or small and thickly studded. These spots proved equally fatal with the pest-boils, which had been from the first regarded as a sure sign of death.* No power of medecine brought relief—almost all died within the first three days, some sooner, some later, after the appearance of these signs, and for the most part entirely without fever§ or other symptoms. The plague spread itself with the greater fury, as it communicated from the

* From this period black petechiæ have always been considered as fatal in the plague.

§ A very usual circumstance in plague epidemics.

sick to the healthy, like fire among dry and oily fuel, and even contact with the clothes and other articles which had been used by the infected, seemed to induce the disease. As it advanced, not only men, but animals fell sick and shortly expired, if they had touched things belonging to the diseased or dead. Thus Boccacio himself saw two hogs on the rags of a person who had died of plague, after staggering about for a short time, fall down dead, as if they had taken poison. In other places, multitudes of dogs, cats, fowls and other animals, fell victims to the contagion;* and it is to be presumed that other epizootes among animals likewise took place, although the ignorant writers of the fourteenth century are silent on this point.

In Germany there was a repetition in every respect of the same phenomena. The

* *Auger de Biterris*, Vitae Romanor. pontificum, *Muratori* Scriptor. rer. Italic. Vol. III. Pt. II. p. 556.

infallible signs of the oriential bubo-plague with its inevitable contagion were found there as everywhere else; but the mortality was not nearly so great as in the other parts of Europe.* The accounts do not all make mention of the spitting of blood, the diagnostic symptom of this fatal pestilence; we are not, however, thence to conclude that there was any considerable mitigation or modification of the disease, for we must not only take into account the defectiveness of the chronicles, but that isolated testimonies are often contradicted by many others. Thus, the chronicles of Strasburg, which only take notice of boils and glandular swellings in the axillæ and groins,† are opposed by another account,

* Contin. altera Chronici *Guillelmi de Nangis* in *d'Acher*, Spicilegium sive Collectio Veterum Scriptorum, &c. Ed. de la *Barre*, Tom. iii. p. 110.

† "The people all died of boils and inflamed glands which appeared under the arms and in the groins." *Jac. v. Königshoven*, the oldest chronicle of Alsace and Strasburg, and indeed of all Germany. Strasburg, 1698. 4. cap. 5, § 86. p. 301.

according to which the mortal spitting of blood was met with in Germany;* but this again is rendered suspicious, as the narrator postpones the death of those who were thus affected, to the sixth, and (even the) eighth day, whereas, no other author sanctions so long a course of the disease; and even in Strasburg, where a mitigation of the plague may, with most probability, be assumed, since in the year 1349, only 16,000 people were carried off, the generality expired by the third or fourth day.† In Austria, and especially in Vienna, the plague was fully as malignant as any where, so that the patients who had red spots and black boils, as well as those afflicted with tumid glands, died about the third day;§ and lastly, very frequent sudden

* *Hainr. Rebdorff*, Annals, *Marq. Freher.* Germanicarum. rerum Scriptores. Francof, 1624. fol. p. 439.

† *Königshoven*, in loc. cit.

§ Anonym. Leobiens. Chron. L. VI. in *Hier. Pez*, Scriptor. rer. Austriac. Lips. 1721. fol. Tom. 1, p. 970. The above named appearances are here called, *rote sprinkel, swarcze erhubenn* und *druesz under den üchsen und ze den gemächten.*

deaths occurred on the coasts of the North Sea and in Westphalia, without any further development of the malady.*

To France, this plague came in a northern direction from Avignon, and was there more destructive than in Germany, so that in many places not more than two in twenty of the inhabitants survived. Many were struck, as if by lightning, and died on the spot, and this more frequently among the young and strong than the old; patients with enlarged glands in the axillæ and groins scarcely survived two or three days; and no sooner did these fatal signs appear, than they bid adieu to the world, and sought consolation only in the absolution which Pope Clement VI. promised them in the hour of death.†

In England the malady appeared, as at Avignon, with spitting of blood, and with the same fatality, so that the sick who were

* *Ubb. Emmiie* rer. Frisiacar. histor. L. XIV. p. 203. Lugd. Bat. 1616. fol.

† *Guillelmus de Nangis.*

afflicted either with this symptom or with vomiting of blood, died in some cases immediately, in others within twelve hours, or at the latest, in two days.* The inflammatory boils and buboes in the groins and axillæ were recognised at once as prognosticating a fatal issue, and those were past all hope of recovery in whom they arose in numbers all over the body. It was not till towards the close of the plague that they ventured to open, by incision, these hard and dry boils, when matter flowed from them in small quantity, and thus, by compelling nature to a critical suppuration, many patients were saved. Every spot which the sick had touched, their breath, their clothes, spread the contagion; and, as in all other places, the attendants and friends who were either blind to their danger or heroically despised it, fell a sacrifice to their sympathy. Even the eyes of the patient were considered as

* *Ant. Wood*, Historia et Antiquitates U[illegible] Oxoniens. Oxon. 1764, fol. L. 1. p. 17[illegible]

sources of contagion,* which had the power of acting at a distance, whether on account of their unwonted lustre or the distortion which they always suffer in plague, or whether in conformity with an ancient notion, according to which the sight was considered as the bearer of a demoniacal enchantment. Flight from infected cities seldom availed the fearful, for the germ of the disease adhered to them, and they fell sick, remote from assistance, in the solitude of their country houses.

Thus did the plague spread over England with unexampled rapidity, after it had first broken out in the county of Dorset, whence it advanced through the counties of Devon and Somerset, to Bristol, and thence reached Gloucester, Oxford and London. Probably few places escaped, perhaps not any; for the annals of contemporaries report, that throughout the land only a

* *Mezeray*, Histoire de France, Paris, 1685. fol. T. 11 p. 418.

tenth part of the inhabitants remained alive.*

From England the contagion was carried by a ship to Bergen, the capital of Norway, where the plague then broke out in its most frightful form, with vomiting of blood; and throughout the whole country, spared not more than a third of the inhabitants. The sailors found no refuge in their ships; and vessels were often seen driving about on the ocean and drifting on shore, whose crews had perished to the last man.†

* *Barnes*, who has given a lively picture of the black plague, in England, taken from the Registers of the 14th century, describes the external symptoms in the following terms: knobs or swellings in the groin or under the arm-pits, called kernels, biles, blains, blisters, pimples, wheals or plague-sores. The Hist. of Edw. III. Cambridge. 1688. fol. p. 432.

† *Torfaeus*, Historia rerum Norvegicarum. Hafn. 1711. fol. L. ix. c. 8. p. 478. This author has followed *Pontanus* (Rerum Danicar. Historia. Amstelod. 1631. fol.) who has given only a general account of the plague in Denmark, and nothing respecting its symptoms.

In Poland the infected were attacked with spitting of blood, and died in a few days in such vast numbers, that, as it has been affirmed, scarcely a fourth of the inhabitants were left.*

Finally, in Russia the plague appeared two years later than in Southern Europe; yet here again, with the same symptoms as elsewhere. Russian contemporaries have recorded that it began with rigor, heat, and darting pain in the shoulders and back; that it was accompanied by spitting of blood, and terminated fatally in two, or at most, three days. It is not till the year 1360, that we find buboes mentioned as occurring in the neck, in the axillæ and in the groins, which are stated to have broken out when the spitting of blood had continued some time. According to the experience of Western Europe, however, it cannot be assumed that these

* *Dlugoss*, S. Longini Histor. polonic. L. xii. Lips. 1711. fol. T. 1. p. 1086.

symptoms did not appear at an earlier period.*

Thus much, from authentic sources, on the nature of the Black Death. The descriptions which have been communicated contain, with a few unimportant exceptions, all the symptoms of the oriental plague which have been observed in more modern times. No doubt can obtain on this point. The facts are placed clearly before our eyes. We must, however, bear in mind, that this violent disease does not always appear in the same form, and that while the essence of the poison which it produces, and which is separated so abundantly from the body of the patient, remains unchanged, it is proteiform in its varieties, from the almost imperceptible vesicle, unaccompanied by fever, which exists for some time

* *W. M. Richter*, Geschichte der Medicin in Russland. Moskwa, 1813. 8. p. 215. *Richter* has taken his information on the black plague in Russia, from Authentic Russian MSS.

before it extends its poison inwardly, and then excites fever and buboes, to the fatal form in which carbuncular inflammations fall upon the most important viscera.

Such was the form which the plague assumed in the 14th century, for the accompanying chest affection which appeared in all the countries whereof we have received any account, cannot, on a comparison with similar and familiar symptoms, be considered as any other than the inflammation of the lungs of modern medicine,* a disease which at present only appears sporadically, and, owing to a putrid decomposition of the fluids, is probably combined with hemorrhages from the vessels of the lungs. Now, as every carbuncle, whether it be cutaneous or internal, generates in abundance the matter of contagion which has given rise to it, so, therefore, must the breath of the affected have been poisonous in this plague,

* Compare on this point, *Ballings* treatise "Zur Diagnostik der Lungenerweichung." Vol. XVI. ii. 3. p. 257 of lit. Annalen der ges. Heilkunde.

and on this account its power of contagion wonderfully increased; wherefore the opinion appears incontrovertible, that owing to the accumulated numbers of the diseased, not only individual chambers and houses, but whole cities were infected, which, moreover, in the middle ages, were, with few exceptions, narrowly built, kept in a filthy state, and surrounded with stagnant ditches.* Flight was, in consequence, of no avail to the timid; for even though they had sedulously avoided all communication with the diseased and the suspected, yet their clothes were saturated with the pestiferous atmosphere, and every inspiration imparted to them the seeds of the destructive malady, which, in the greater number of cases, germinated with but too much fertility. Add to which, the usual propagation of the plague through clothes, beds, and a thousand other things

* It is expressly ascertained with respect to Avignon and Paris, that uncleanliness of the streets increased the plague considerably. *Raim. Chalin de Vinario.*

to which the pestilential poison adheres,— a propagation, which, from want of caution, must have been infinitely multiplied; and since articles of this kind, removed from the access of air, not only retain the matter of contagion for an indefinite period, but also increase its activity and engender it like a living being, frightful ill-consequences followed for many years after the first fury of the pestilence was past.

The affection of the stomach, often mentioned in vague terms, and occasionally as a vomiting of blood, was doubtless only a subordinate symptom, even if it be admitted that actual hematemesis did occur. For the difficulty of distinguishing a flow of blood from the stomach, from a pulmonic expectoration of that fluid, is, to non-medical men, even in common cases, not inconsiderable. How much greater then must it have been in so terrible a disease, where assistants could not venture to approach the sick without exposing themselves to certain death? Only two medical descriptions of the malady have

reached us, the one by the brave *Guy de Chauliac*, the other by *Raymond Chalin de Vinario*, a very experienced scholar, who was well versed in the learning of his time. The former takes notice only of fatal coughing of blood; the latter, besides this, notices epistaxis, hematuria and fluxes of blood from the bowels, as symptoms of such decided and speedy mortality, that those patients in whom they were observed, usually died on the same or the following day.*

**De Peste* Libri tres, opera *Jacobi Dalechampii* in lucem editi. Lugdani, 1552. 16. p. 35. *Dalechamp* has only improved the language of this work, adding nothing to it but a preface in the form of two letters. *Raymond Chalin de Vinario* was contemporary with *Guy de Chauliac* at Avignon. He enjoyed a high reputation, and was in very affluent circumstances. He often makes mention of cardinals and high officers of the papal court, whom he had treated; and it is even probable, though not certain, that he was physician to Clement VI. (1342—1352), Innocent VI. (1352— and Urban the V. (1362—1370). He and *Guy de Chauliac* never mention each other.

That a vomiting of blood may not, here and there, have taken place, perhaps have been even prevalent in many places, is, from a consideration of the nature of the disease, by no means to be denied; for every putrid decomposition of the fluids, begets a tendency to hemorrhages of all kinds. Here, however, it is a question of historical certainty, which, after these doubts, is by no means established. Had not so speedy a death followed the expectoration of blood, we should certainly have received more detailed intelligence respecting other hemorrhages; but the malady had no time to extend its effects further over the extremities of the vessels. After its first fury, however, was spent, the pestilence passed into the usual febrile form of the oriental plague. Internal, carbuncular inflammations no longer took place, and hemorrhages became phenomena, no more essential in this than they are in any other febrile disorders. Chalin, who observed not only the *great mortality* of 1348, and the plague

of 1360, but also that of 1373 and 1382, speaks moreover of *affections of the throat*, and describes the *black spots* of plague patients more satisfactorily than any of his cotemporaries. The former appeared but in few cases, and consisted in carbuncular inflammation of the gullet, with a difficulty of swallowing, even to suffocation, to which, in some instances, was added inflammation of the ceruminous glands of the ears, with tumours, producing great deformity. Such patients, as well as others, were affected with expectoration of blood; but they did not usually die before the sixth, and sometimes, even so late as the fourteenth day.* The same occurrence, it is well known, is not uncommon in other pestilences; as also blisters on the surface of the body, in different places, in the vicinity of which, tumid glands and inflammatory boils, surrounded

* *Dalechamp*, p. 205—where, and at pp. 32-36, the plague-eruptions are mentioned in the usual indefinite terms: Exanthemata viridia, cærulea, nigra, rubra, lata, diffusa, velut signata punctis, &c.

by discoloured and black streaks, arose, and thus indicated the reception of the poison. These streaked spots were called, by an apt comparison, *the girdle*, and this appearance was justly considered extremely dangerous.*

* "Pestilentis morbi gravissimum symptoma est, quod zonam vulgo nuncupant. Ea sic fit: Pustulæ nonnunquam per febres pestilentes fuscæ, nigræ, lividæ existunt, in partibus corporis a glandularum emissariis sejunctis, ut in femore, tibia, capite, brachio, humeris, quarum fervore et caliditate succi corporis attracti, glandulas in trajectione replent, et attollunt, unde bubones fiunt atque carbunculi. *Ab iis tanquam solidus quidam nervus in partem vicinam distentam ac veluti convulsione rigentem producitur, puta Brachium vel tibiam, nunc rubens, nunc fuscus, nunc obscurior, nunc virens, nunc Iridis colore, duos vel quatuor digitos latus.* Hujus summo, qua desinit in emissarium, plerumque tuberculum pestilens visitur, altero vero extremo, qua in propinquum membrum porrigitur, carbunculus. Hoc scilicet malum vulgus zonam cinctumve nominat, periculosum minus, cum hic tuberculo, illic carbunculo terminatur, quam si tuberculum in capite solum emineat." p. 198.

CHAPTER III.

Causes.—Spread.

An enquiry into the causes of the Black Death, will not be without important results in the study of the plagues which have visited the world, although it cannot advance beyond generalisation without entering upon a field hitherto uncultivated, and, to this hour, entirely unknown. Mighty revolutions in the organism of the earth, of which we have credible information, had preceded it. From China to the Atlantic, the foundations of the earth were shaken,—throughout Asia and Europe the atmosphere was in commotion, and endangered, by its baneful influence, both vegetable and animal life.

The series of these great events began in the year 1333, fifteen years before th[redacted]

plague broke out in Europe: they first appeared in China. Here a parching drought, accompanied by famine, commenced in the tract of country watered by the rivers Kiang and Hoai. This was followed by such violent torrents of rain, in and about Kingsai, at that time the capital of the Empire, that, according to tradition, more than 400,000 people perished in the floods. Finally, the mountain Tsincheou fell in, and vast clefts were formed in the earth. In the succeeding year (1334), passing over fabulous traditions, the neighbourhood of Canton was visited by inundations; whilst in Tche, after an unexampled drought, a plague arose, which is said to have carried off about 5,000,000 of people. A few months afterwards an earthquake followed, at and near Kingsai; and subsequent to the falling in of the mountains of Ki-ming-chan, a lake was formed of more th[illegible] gues in circumferer[illegible]sands found their

grave. In Hou-kouang and Ho-nan, a drought prevailed for five months; and innumerable swarms of locusts destroyed the vegetation; while famine and pestilence, as usual, followed in their train. Connected accounts of the condition of Europe before this great catastrophe, are not to be expected from the writers of the fourteenth century. It is remarkable, however, that simultaneously with a drought and renewed floods in China, in 1336, many uncommon atmospheric phenomena, and in the winter, frequent thunder storms, were observed in the north of France; and so early as the eventful year of 1333, an eruption of Etna took place.* According to the Chinese annals, about 4,000,000 of people perished by famine in the neighbourhood

* V. Hoff. Geschichte der natürlichen Veränderungen der Erdoberfläche, T. II. p. 264. Gotha, 1824. This eruption was not succeeded by any other in the same century, either of Etna or of Vesuvius.

of Kiang in 1337; and deluges, swarms of locusts, and an earthquake which lasted six days, caused incredible devastation. In the same year, the first swarms of locusts appeared in Franconia, which were succeeded in the following year by myriads of these insects. In 1338, Kingsai was visited by an earthquake of ten days duration; at the same time France suffered from a failure in the harvest; and thenceforth, till the year 1342, there was in China, a constant succession of inundations, earthquakes, and famines. In the same year great floods occurred in the vicinity of the Rhine and in France, which could not be attributed to rain alone; for, everywhere, even on the tops of mountains, springs were seen to burst forth, and dry tracts were laid under water in an inexplicable manner. In the following year, the mountain Hong-tchang, in China, fell in, and caused a destructive deluge; and in Pien-tcheou and Leang-tcheou, after

three months' rain, there followed unheard of inundations, which destroyed seven cities. In Egypt and Syria, violent earthquakes took place; and in China they became, from this time, more and more frequent; for they recurred, in 1344, in Ven-tcheou, where the sea overflowed in consequence; in 1345, in Ki-tcheou, and in both the following years in Canton, with subterraneous thunder. Meanwhile, floods and famine devastated various districts, until 1347, when the fury of the elements subsided in China.*

The signs of terrestrial commotions commenced in Europe in the year 1348, after the intervening districts of country in Asia had probably been visited in the same manner.

On the island of Cyprus, the plague from the East had already broken out; when an earthquake shook the foundations of the island, and was accompanied by so

* Deguignes Loc. cit. p. 226, from Chinese sources.

frightful a hurricane, that the inhabitants who had slain their Mahometan slaves, in order that they might not themselves be subjugated by them, fled in dismay, in all directions. The sea overflowed—the ships were dashed to pieces on the rocks, and few outlived the terrific event, whereby this fertile and blooming island was converted into a desert. Before the earthquake, a pestiferous wind spread so poisonous an odour, that many, being overpowered by it, fell down suddenly and expired in dreadful agonies.*

This phenomenon is one of the rarest that has ever been observed, for nothing is more constant than the composition of the air; and in no respect has nature been more careful in the preservation of organic life. Never have naturalists discovered in the atmosphere, foreign elements, which, evident to the senses, and borne by the winds, spread from land to

* Deguignes Loc. cit. p. 225.

land, carrying disease over whole portions of the earth, as is recounted to have taken place in the year 1348. It is, therefore, the more to be regretted, that in this extraordinary period, which, owing to the low condition of science, was very deficient in accurate observers, so little that can be depended on respecting those uncommon occurrences in the air, should have been recorded. Yet, German accounts say expressly, that a thick, stinking mist advanced from the East, and spread itself over Italy;* and there could be no de-

* There were also many locusts which had been blown into the sea by a hurricane, and afterwards cast dead upon the shore, and produced a noxious exhalation; and *a dense and awful fog was seen in the heavens, rising in the East, and descending upon Italy*. Mansfeld Chronicle, in *Cyriac Spangenberg*, chap. 287, fol. 336. Eisleben, 1572. Compare *Staind.* Chron. (?) *by Schnurrer.* (" Ingens vapor magnitudine horribili boreali movens, regionem magno adspicientium terrore dilabitur".) and *Ad. von Lebenwaldt*, Land-Stadt-und Hausarzney-Buch fol. p. 15. Nuremberg, 1695, who mentions

ception in so palpable a phenomenon.* The credibility of unadorned traditions, however little they may satisfy to physical research, can scarcely be called in question when we consider the connexion of events; for just at this time earthquakes were more general than they had been within the range of history. In thousands of places chasms were formed, from whence arose noxious vapours; and as at that time natural occurrences were transformed into miracles, it was reported, that a fiery meteor, which descended on the earth far in the East, had destroyed every thing within a circumference of more than a hundred leagues, infecting the air far

a dark, thick mist which covered the earth. *Chalin* expresses himself on this subject in the following terms:— Coelum ingravescit, *aër impurus sentitur: nubes crassae ac multae luminibus coeli obstruunt, immundus ac ignavus tepor hominum emollit corpora, exoriens sol pallescit.*" p. 50.

* See Caius' account of the causes of the sweating sickness, in the Appendix.—*Translator.*

and wide.* The consequences of innumerable floods contributed to the same effect; vast river districts had been converted into swamps; foul vapours arose every where, increased by the odour of putrified locusts, which had never perhaps darkened the sun in thicker swarms,† and of countless corpses, which even in the well-regulated countries of Europe, they knew not how to remove quickly enough out of the sight of the living. It is probable, therefore, that the atmosphere contained foreign, and sensibly perceptible, admixtures to a great extent, which, at least in the lower regions, could not be decomposed, or rendered ineffective by separation.

* *Mezeray* Histoire de France, Tom. II. 418. Paris, 1685. *V. Oudegheerst's* Chroniques de Flandres. Antwerp, 1571, 4to. Chap. 175, f. 297.

†They spread in a direction from East to West, over most of the countries from which we have received intelligence. Anonym. Leobiens, Chron. Loc. cit.

Now, if we go back to the symptoms of the disease, the ardent inflammation of the lungs points out, that the organs of respiration yielded to the attack of an atmospheric poison—a poison, which (if we admit the independent origin of the Black Plague at any one place on the globe, which, under such extraordinary circumstances, it would be difficult to doubt,) attacked the course of the circulation in as hostile a manner as that which produces inflammation of the spleen and other animal contagions that cause swelling and inflammation of the lymphatic glands.

Pursuing the course of these grand revolutions further, we find notice of an unexampled earthquake, which, on the 25th of January, 1348, shook Greece, Italy and the neighbouring countries. Naples, Rome, Pisa, Bologna, Padua, Venice and many other cities suffered considerably: whole villages were swallowed up. Castles, houses and churches, were

overthrown, and hundreds of people were buried beneath their ruins.* In Carinthia, thirty villages, together with all the churches, were demolished; more than a thousand corpses were drawn out of the rubbish; the city of Villach was so completely destroyed, that very few of its inhabitants were saved; and when the earth ceased to tremble, it was found that mountains had been moved from their positions, and that many hamlets were left in ruins.§ It is recorded, that during this earthquake, the wine in the casks became turbid, a statement which may be considered as furnishing a proof, that changes causing a decomposition of the atmosphere had taken place; but if we had no other information from which the excitement of conflicting powers of nature during

* *Giov. Villani* Istorie Fiorentine, L. XII. chap. 121, 122. in Muratori T. XIII. pp. 1001, 1002. Compare Barnes Loc. cit. p. 430.

§ I. *Vitoduran.* Chronicon, in *Fuseli. Thesaurus* Histor. Helvet. Tigur. 1735, fol. p. 84.

these commotions, might be inferred, yet scientific observations in modern times have shewn, that the relation of the atmosphere to the earth is changed by volcanic influences. Why then, may we not, from this fact, draw retrospective inferences respecting those extraordinary phenomena?

Independently of this, however, we know that during this earthquake, the duration of which is stated by some to have been a week, and by others, a fortnight, people experienced an unusual stupor and headache, and that many fainted away.*

These destructive earthquakes extended as far as the neighbourhood of Basle,§ and recurred until the year 1360, throughout Germany, France, Silesia, Poland, England and Denmark, and much further north.‡

* *Albert Argentiniens.* Chronic. in *Urstis* Scriptor. rer. Germanic. Francof. 1585. fol. P. II. p. 147. Compare *Chalin.* Loc. Cit.

§ *Petrach.* Opera. Basil 1554. fol. p. 210. *Barnes.* Loc. cit.

‡ "Un tremblement de terre universel, mesme en

Great and extraordinary meteors appeared in many places, and were regarded with superstitious horror. A pillar of fire, which on the 20th of December, 1348, remained for an hour at sun rise over the pope's palace in Avignon;* a fireball, which in August of the same year was seen at sunset over Paris, and was distinguished from similar phenomena, by its longer duration,§ (not to mention other instances mixed up with wonderful prophecies and omens), are recorded in the chronicles of that age.

The order of the seasons seemed to be inverted,—rains, floods and failures in crops

France et aux pays septentrionaux, renversoit les villes toutes entières, déracinoit les arbres et les montagnes, et remplissoit les campagnes d'abysmes si profondes, qu'il semblait que l'enfer eût voulu engloutir le genre humain. *Mezeray* Loc. cit. p. 418. *Barnes* p. 431.

* *Villani.* Loc. cit. c. 119. p. 1000.

§ *Guillelm de Nanges*, Cont. alt. Chron. Loc. cit. p. 109.

were so general, that few places were exempt from them; and though an historian of this century assures us, that there was an abundance in the granaries and storehouses,* all his contemporaries, with one voice, contradict him. The consequences of failure in the crops were soon felt, especially in Italy and the surrounding countries, where, in this year, a rain which continued for four months, had destroyed the seed. In the larger cities, they were compelled, in the spring of 1347, to have recourse to a distribution of bread among the poor, particularly at Florence, where they erected large bake-houses, from which, in April, ninety-four thousand loaves of bread, each of twelve ounces in weight, were daily dispensed.§ It is plain, however, that humanity could only partially mitigate the general distress, not altogether obviate it.

* *Guillelm de Nanges* Cont. alt. Chron. Loc. cit. p. 110.

§ *Villani.* Loc. cit. c. 72. p. 954.

Diseases, the invariable consequence of famine, broke out in the country, as well as in cities; children died of hunger in their mothers' arms,— want, misery and despair, were general throughout Christendom.*

Such are the events which took place before the eruption of the Black Plague in Europe. Contemporaries have explained them after their own manner, and have thus, like their posterity, under similar circumstances, given a proof, that mortals possess neither senses nor intellectual powers sufficiently acute to comprehend the phenomena produced by the earth's organism, much less scientifically to understand their effects. Superstition, selfishness in a thousand forms, the presumption of the schools, laid hold of unconnected

* Anonym. Istorie Pistolesi, in *Muratori*, T. XI. p. 524. "Ne gli anni di Chr. 1346 et 1347, fu grandissima carestia in tutta la Christianità, in tanto, che molta gente moria di fame, e fu grande mortalità in ogni paese del mondo."

facts. They vainly thought to comprehend the whole in the individual, and perceived not the universal spirit which, in intimate union with the mighty powers of nature, animates the movements of all existence, and permits not any phenomenon to originate from isolated causes. To attempt, five centuries after that age of desolation, to point out the causes of a cosmical commotion, which has never recurred to an equal extent,—to indicate scientifically the influences which called forth so terrific a poison in the bodies of men and animals, exceeds the limits of human understanding. If we are even now unable, with all the varied resources of an extended knowledge of nature, to define that condition of the atmosphere by which pestilences are generated, still less can we pretend to reason retrospectively from the nineteenth to the fourteenth century; but if we take a general view of the occurrences, that century will give us copious infor-

mation, and, as applicable to all succeeding times, of high importance.

In the progress of connected natural phenomena, from East to West, that great law of nature is plainly revealed which has so often and evidently manifested itself in the earth's organism, as well as in the state of nations dependent upon it. In the inmost depths of the globe, that impulse was given in the year 1333, which in uninterrupted succession for six-and-twenty years shook the surface of the earth, even to the western shores of Europe. From the very beginning the air partook of the terrestrial concussion, atmospherical waters overflowed the land, or its plants and animals perished under the scorching heat. The insect tribe was wonderfully called into life, as if animated beings were destined to complete the destruction which astral and telluric powers had begun. Thus did this dreadful work of nature advance from year to year; it was a

progressive infection of the Zones which exerted a powerful influence both above and beneath the surface of the earth; and after having been perceptible in slighter indications, at the commencement of the terrestrial commotions in China, convulsed the whole earth.

The nature of the first plague in China is unknown. We have no certain intelligence of the disease, until it entered the western countries of Asia. Here it shewed itself as the oriental plague with inflammation of the lungs; in which form it probably also may have begun in China, that is to say, as a malady which spreads, more than any other, by contagion—a contagion, that, in ordinary pestilences, requires immediate contact, and only under unfavorable circumstances of rare occurrence is communicated by the mere approach to the sick. The share which this cause had in the spreading of the plague over the whole earth, was certainly very great: and the opinion that the Black

Death might have been excluded from Western Europe, by good regulations, similar to those which are now in use, would have all the support of modern experience; provided it could be proved that this plague had been actually imported from the East; or that the oriental plague in general, as often as it appears in Europe, always has its origin in Asia or Egypt. Such a proof, however, cannot be produced so as to enforce conviction; for it would involve the impossible assumption, that either there is no essential difference in the degree of civilization of the European nations, in the most ancient and in modern times, or that detrimental circumstances, which have yielded only to the civilization of human society and the regular cultivation of countries, could not formerly have maintained the bubo-plague.

The plague was, however, known in Europe before nations were united by the bonds of commerce and social

intercourse; * hence there is ground for supposing that it sprung up spontaneously, in consequence of the rude manner of living and the uncultivated state of the earth; influences which peculiarly favor the origin of severe diseases. Now, we need not go back to the earlier centuries, for the 14th itself, before it was half expired, was visited by five or six pestilences.§

If, therefore, we consider the peculiar property of the plague, that, in countries which it has once visited, it remains for

* According to *Papon*, its origin is quite lost in the obscurity of remote ages; and even before the Christian Era, we are able to trace many references to former pestilences. De la peste, ou époques mémorables de ce fléau, et les moyens de s'en préserver. T. II. Paris, An. VIII de la rép. 8.

§ 1301, in the South of France; 1311, in Italy; 1316, in Italy, Burgundy and Northern Europe; 1335, the locust years, in the middle of Europe; 1340, in upper Italy; 1342, in France; and 1347, in Marseilles and most of the larger islands of the Mediterranean. Ibid. T. II. p. 273.

a long time in a milder form, and that the epidemic influences of 1342, when it had appeared for the last time, were particularly favorable to its unperceived continuance, till 1348, we come to the notion, that in this eventful year also, the germs of plague existed in Southern Europe, which might be vivified by atmospherical deteriorations; and that thus, at least in part, the Black Plague may have originated in Europe itself. The corruption of the atmosphere came from the East; but the disease itself came not upon the wings of the wind, but was only excited and increased by the atmosphere where it had previously existed.

This source of the Black Plague was not, however, the only one; for, far more powerful than the excitement of the latent elements of the plague by atmospheric influences, was the effect of the contagion communicated from one people to another, on the great roads, and in the harbours of the Mediterranean. From China, the route of the caravans lay to the north of

the Caspian Sea, through Central Asia, to Tauris. Here ships were ready to take the produce of the East to Constantinople, the capital of commerce, and the medium of connexion between Asia, Europe and Africa.* Other caravans went from India to Asia Minor, and touched at the cities south of the Caspian Sea, and lastly, from Bagdad, through Arabia to Egypt; also the maritime communication on the Red Sea, from India to Arabia and Egypt, was not inconsiderable. In all these directions contagion made its way; and doubtless, Constantinople and the harbours of Asia Minor, are to be regarded as the foci of infection; whence it radiated to the most distant seaports and islands.

To Constantinople, the plague had been brought from the northern coast of the Black Sea,† after it had depopulated the

*Compare *Deguignes*. Loc. cit. p. 288.

†According to the general Byzantine designation, "from the country of the hyperborean Scythians." *Kantakuzen*. Loc. cit.

countries between those routes of commerce; and appeared as early as 1347, in Cyprus, Sicily, Marseilles and some of the seaports of Italy. The remaining islands of the Mediterranean, particularly Sardinia, Corsica and Majorca, were visited in succession. Foci of contagion existed also in full activity along the whole southern coast of Europe; when, in January 1348, the plague appeared in Avignon,* and in other cities in the south of France and north of Italy, as well as in Spain.

The precise days of its eruption in the individual towns, are no longer to be ascertained; but it was not simultaneous: for in Florence, the disease appeared in the beginning of April;† in Cesena, the 1st of June;§ and place after place was attacked throughout the whole year; so that the plague, after it had passed through the

* *Guid. Cauliac*, Loc. cit.

† *Matt. Villani*, Istorie, in *Muratori*, T. XIV. p. 14.

§ Annal. Caesenat, *Ibid.* p. 1179.

whole of France and Germany, where, however, it did not make its ravages until the following year, did not break out till August, in England; where it advanced so gradually, that a period of three months elapsed before it reached London.* The Northern Kingdoms were attacked by it in 1349. Sweden, indeed, not until November of that year: almost two years after its eruption in Avignon.† Poland received the plague in 1349, probably from Germany,§ if not from the northern countries; but in Russia, it did not make its appearance until 1351, more than three years after it had broken out in Constantinople. Instead of advancing in a northwesterly direction from Tauris and from the Caspian Sea, it had thus made the great circuit of the Black Sea, by way of Constan-

* *Barnes.* Loc. cit.

† *Olof Dalin's,* Svea-Rikes Historie, III. vol. *Stockholm,* 1747—61, 4. Vol. II. C. 12, p. 496.

§ *Dlugoss,* Histor. Polon. L. IX. p. 1086, T. I. *Lips.* 1711, fol.

tinople, Southern and Central Europe, England, the Northern Kingdoms and Poland, before it reached the Russian territories; a phenomenon which has not again occurred with respect to more recent pestilences originating in Asia.

Whether any difference existed between the indigenous plague, excited by the influence of the atmosphere, and that which was imported by contagion, can no longer be ascertained from the facts; for the contemporaries, who in general were not competent to make accurate researches of this kind, have left no data on the subject. A milder and a more malignant form certainly existed, and the former was not always derived from the latter, as is to be supposed from this circumstance—that the spitting of blood, the infallible diagnostic of the latter, on the first breaking out of the plague, is not similarly mentioned in all the reports; and it is therefore probable, that the milder form belonged to the native plague,—the more malignant,

to that introduced by contagion. Contagion was, however, in itself, only one of many causes which gave rise to the Black Plague.

This disease was a consequence of violent commotions in the earth's organism—if any disease of cosmical origin can be so considered. One spring set a thousand others in motion for the annihilation of living beings, transient or permanent, of mediate or immediate effect. The most powerful of all was contagion; for in the most distant countries which had scarcely yet heard the echo of the first concussion, the people fell a sacrifice to organic poison,—the untimely offspring of vital energies thrown into violent commotion.

CHAPTER IV.

Mortality.

We have no certain measure by which to estimate the ravages of the Black Plague, if numerical statements were wanted, as in modern times. Let us go back for a moment to the 14th century. The people were yet but little civilized. The church had indeed subdued them; but they all suffered from the ill-consequences of their original rudeness. The dominion of the law was not yet confirmed. Sovereigns had everywhere to combat powerful enemies to internal tranquillity and security. The cities were fortresses for their own defence. Marauders encamped on the roads — The husbandman was a feodal slave, without possessions of his own. —

Rudeness was general—Humanity, as yet unknown to the people.—Witches and heretics were burned alive.—Gentle rulers were contemned as weak;—wild passions, severity and cruelty, everywhere predominated.—Human life was little regarded.—Governments concerned not themselves about the numbers of their subjects, for whose welfare it was incumbent on them to provide. Thus, the first requisite for estimating the loss of human life, namely, a knowledge of the amount of the population, is altogether wanting; and, moreover, the traditional statements of the amount of this loss, are so vague, that from this source likewise, there is only room for probable conjecture.

Kairo lost daily, when the plague was raging with its greatest violence, from 10 to 15,000; being as many as, in modern times, great plagues have carried off during their whole course. In China, more than thirteen millions are said to have died; and this is in correspondence

with the certainly exaggerated accounts from the rest of Asia. India was depopulated. Tartary, the Tartar Kingdom of Kaptschak, Mesapotamia, Syria, Armenia, were covered with dead bodies—the Kurds fled in vain to the mountains. In Caramania and Caesarea, none were left alive. On the roads, — in the camps,—in the caravansaries, — unburied bodies alone were seen ; and a few cities only (Arabian historians name, Maara el nooman, Schisur and Harem) remained, in an unaccountable manner, free. In Aleppo, 500 died daily; 22,000 people, and most of the animals, were carried off in Gaza, within six weeks. Cyprus lost almost all its inhabitants;* and ships without crews were often seen in the Mediterranean; as afterwards in the North Sea, driving about, and spreading the plague wherever they went on shore.† It was reported to Pope

* *Deguignes*, Loc. cit. p. 223, f.

† *Matt. Villani*, Istoria, Loc. cit. p. 13.

Clement, at Avignon, that throughout the East, probably with the exception of China, 23,840,000 people had fallen victims to the plague.* Considering the occurrences of the 14th and 15th centuries, we might, on first view, suspect the accuracy of this statement. How (it might be asked) could such great wars have been carried on—such powerful efforts have been made; how could the Greek empire, only a hundred years later, have been overthrown, if the people really had been so utterly destroyed?

This account is nevertheless rendered credible by the ascertained fact, that the palaces of princes are less accessible to contagious diseases, than the dwellings of the multitude; and that in places of importance, the influx from those districts which have suffered least, soon repairs even the heaviest losses. We must remember also, that we do not gather much from mere numbers without an intimate know-

* *Knighton*, in *Barnes*, Loc. cit. p. 434.

ledge of the state of Society. We will, therefore, confine ourselves to exhibiting some of the more credible accounts relative to European cities.

In Florence there died of the Black Plague - -	60,000*
In Venice - -	100,000†
In Marseilles, in one month	16,000§
In Siena - - -	70,000‡
In Paris - - -	50,000‖
In St. Denys - -	14,000¶
In Avignon - -	60,000°

* *Jno. Trithem* Annal. Hirsaugiens. Monast. St. Gall. Hirsaug. 1690. fol. 1. T. II. p. 296. According to *Boccacio*, Loc. cit. 100,000; according to *Matt. Villani*, Loc. cit. p. 14. three out of five.

†*Odoric Raynald* Annal. ecclesiastic. Colon. Agripp. 1691. fol. Vol. XVI. p. 280.

§ *Vitoduran* Chronic. in *Füssli*. Loc. cit.

‡ *Tromby*, Storia de *S. Brunone* e dell' ordine Cartusiano. Vol. VI. L. VIII. p. 235. Napol. 1777. fol.

‖ *Barnes* p. 435.

¶ Ditto.

° *Baluz.* Vitae Papar. Avenionens. Paris 1693—4.

In Strasburg	-	-	16,000*
In Lübeck	-	-	9,000†

Vol. I. p. 316. According to *Rebdorf* in *Freher.* Loc. cit. at the worst period, 500 daily.

* *Königshoven.* Loc. cit.

†According to *Reimer Kork*, from Easter to Michaelmas 1350, 80 to 90,000; among whom were eleven members of the senate, and bishop John IV. Vid. *John Rud. Becker*, Circumstantial History of the Imper. and free city of Lübeck. Lübeck: 1782, 84, 1805. 3 Vols. 4. Vol. I. p. 269. 71. Although Lübeck was then in its most flourishing state, yet this account, which agrees with that of *Paul Lange*, is certainly exaggerated. (Chronic. Citizense, in *I. Pistorius*, Rerum Germanic. Scriptores aliquot insignes, cur. *Struve* Ratisb. 1626. fol. p. 1214.) We have, therefore, chosen the lower estimate of an anonym. writer. Chronic. Sclavic. by *Erpold Lindenbrog*. Scriptores rerum Germanic. Septentrional. vicinorumque populor. diversi, Francof. 1630. fol. p. 225, and *Spangenberg*. Loc. cit. with whom again the assurance of the two authors, that on the 10th August, 1350, 15 or 1700, (according to *Becker* 2500) persons had died, does not coincide. See Chronik des Franciskaner Lesemeisters *Detmar*, nach der Urschrift und mit Ergänzugen aus anderen Chro-

In Basle - - -	14,000
In Erfurt, at least -	16,000
In Weimar - -	5,000*
In Limburg - -	2,500†
In London, at least -	100,000§
In Norwich - -	51,100‡
To which may be added—	
Franciscan Friars in Germany	124,434‖
Minorites in Italy - -	30,000¶

This short catalogue might, by a laborious and uncertain calculation, deduced

niken, published by I. H. Grautoff. Hamburg: 1829, —30. 8. P. I. p. 269. App. 471.

* *Förstemann*, Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Geisslergesellschaften, in *Staudlins* und *Izschirner's*, Archiv für alte und neue Kirchengeschichte, Vol. III. 1817.

† Limburg. Chronicle. pub. by *C. D. Vogel*. Marburg: 1828. 8vo. p. 14.

§ *Barnes*. Loc. cit.

‡ Ibid.

‖ *Spangenberg*. fol. 339. A. Grawsam Sterben vieler faulen Troppfen. Many lazy monks died a cruel death.

¶ *Vitoduran*. Loc. cit.

from other sources, be easily further multiplied, but would still fail to give a true picture of the depopulation which took place. Lübeck, at that time the Venice of the North, which could no longer contain the multitudes that flocked to it, was thrown into such consternation on the eruption of the plague, that the citizens destroyed themselves as if in frenzy.

Merchants whose earnings and possessions were unbounded, coldly and willingly renounced their earthly goods. They carried their treasures to monasteries and churches, and laid them at the foot of the altar; but gold had no charms for the monks, for it brought them death. They shut their gates; yet, still it was cast to them over the convent walls. People would brook no impediment to the last pious work to which they were driven by despair. When the plague ceased, men thought they were still wandering among the dead, so appalling was the livid aspect of the survivors, in consequence of the anxiety they had

undergone, and the unavoidable infection of the air.* Many other cities probably presented a similar appearance; and it is ascertained that a great number of small country towns and villages which have been estimated, and not too highly, at 200,000,† were bereft of all their inhabitants.

In many places in France not more than two out of twenty of the inhabitants were left alive,§ and the capital felt the fury of the plague, alike in the palace and the cot.

Two queens,‡ one bishop,‖ and great numbers of other distinguished persons, fell a sacrifice to it, and more than 500 a day died in the Hôtel-Dieu, under the faithful care of the sisters of charity, whose disinterested courage, in this age of horror,

* *Becker*, Loc. cit.

† *Hainr. Rebdorf.* P. 630.

§ *Guillelm de Nang.* Loc. cit.

‡ *Johanna*, queen of Navarre, daughter of *Louis X.*, and *Johanna* of Burgundy, wife of king *Philip* de Valois.

‖ *Fulco de Chanar.*

displayed the most beautiful traits of human virtue. For although they lost their lives, evidently from contagion, and their numbers were several times renewed, there was still no want of fresh candidates, who, strangers to the unchristian fear of death, piously devoted themselves to their holy calling.

The church-yards were soon unable to contain the dead,* and many houses, left without inhabitants, fell to ruins.

In Avignon, the pope found it necessary to consecrate the Rhone, that bodies might be thrown into the river without delay, as the church-yards would no longer hold them;† so likewise, in all populous cities, extraordinary measures were adopted, in order speedily to dispose of the dead. In Vienna, where for some time 1200 in-

* *Mich. Felibien*, Histoire de la ville de Paris. Liv. XII. Vol. II. p. 601, Paris: 1725. fol. Comp. *Guillelm de Nangis.* Loc. cit, and *Daniel* Histoire de France, Tom. II. p. 484. Amsterd. 1720. 4to.

† *Torfaeus.* Loc. cit.

habitants died daily,* the interment of corpses in the church-yards and within the churches, was forthwith prohibited; and the dead were then arranged in layers, by thousands, in six large pits outside the city,† as had already been done in Cairo and Paris. Yet, still many were secretly buried; for at all times, the people are attached to the consecrated cemeteries of their dead, and will not renounce the customary mode of interment.

In many places, it was rumoured that plague patients were buried alive,§ as may

* According to another account, 960. Chronic. Salisburg, in *Pez.* Loc. cit. T. I. p. 412.

† According to an anonymous Chronicler, each of these pits is said to have contained 40,000; this, however, we are to understand as only in round numbers. Anonym. Leobiens, in Pez. p. 970. According to this writer, above seventy persons died in some houses, and many were entirely deserted, and at St. Stephen's alone, fifty-four ecclesiastics were cut off.

§ *Auger. de Biterris* in *Muratori.* Vol. III. P. II. p. 556. In *Gobelin Person*, the same is said of Pa-

sometimes happen through senseless alarm and indecent haste; and thus the horror of the distressed people was every where increased. In Erfurt, after the church-yards were filled, 12,000 corpses were thrown into eleven great pits; and the like might, more or less exactly, be stated with respect to all the larger cities.* Funeral ceremonies, the last consolation of the survivors, were every where impracticable.

In all Germany, according to a probable calculation, there seem to have died only 1,244,434† inhabitants; this country, however, was more spared than others: Italy, on the contrary, was most severely visited. It is said to have lost half its inhabitants;§ and this account is rendered credible from the immense losses of individual cities and provinces: for in Sardinia and

derborn, in *Henr. Meibom.* Rer. Germanic. Script. T. I. p. 286. Helmstadt: 1688. fol.

* *Spangenberg.* Loc. cit. chap. 287, fol. 336-7.

† *Barnes.* 435.

§ *Trithem.* Annal. Hirsaug. Loc. cit.

Corsica, according to the account of the distinguished Florentine, John Villani, who was himself carried off by the Black Plague,* scarcely a third part of the population remained alive; and it is related of the Venetians, that they engaged ships at a high rate to retreat to the islands; so that after the plague had carried off three fourths of her inhabitants, that proud city was left forlorn and desolate.† In Padua, after the cessation of the plague, two thirds of the inhabitants were wanting; and in Florence it was prohibited to publish the numbers of the dead, and to toll the bells at their funerals, in order that the living might not abandon themselves to despair.§

We have more exact accounts of Eng-

* Loc. cit. L. XII. c. 99. p. 977.

† Chronic. Claustro-Neuburg. in *Pez.* Vol. I. p. 490. Comp. *Barnes* p. 435. *Raynald* Histor. ecclesiastic Loc. cit. According to this, a runaway Venetian is said to have brought the plague to Padua.

§ *Giov. Villani*, L. XII. c. 83, p. 964.

land; most of the great cities suffered incredible losses; above all, Yarmouth, in which, 7052 died: Bristol, Oxford, Norwich, Leicester, York and London where, in one burial ground alone, there were interred upwards of 50,000 corpses, arranged in layers, in large pits.* It is said, that in the whole country, scarcely a tenth part remained alive;† but this estimate is evidently too high. Smaller losses were sufficient to cause those convulsions, whose consequences were felt for some centuries, in a false impulse given to civil life, and whose indirect influence, unknown to the English, has, perhaps, extended even to modern times.

Morals were deteriorated every where, and the service of God was, in a great measure, laid aside; for, in many places, the churches were deserted, being bereft of their priests. The instruction of the people

* *Barnes*, p. 436.

† *Wood*, Loc. cit.

was impeded ;* covetousness became general; and when tranquility was restored, the great increase of lawyers was astonishing, to whom the endless disputes regarding inheritances, offered a rich harvest. The want of priests too, throughout the country, operated very detrimentally upon the people (the lower classes being most exposed to the ravages of the plague, whilst the houses of the nobility were, in proportion, much more spared) and it was no compensation that whole bands of ignorant laymen, who had lost their wives during the pestilence, crowded into the monastic orders, that they might participate in the respectability of the priesthood, and in the rich heritages which

* *Wood* says, that before the plague, there were 13,000 students at Oxford; a number, which may, in some degree, enable us to form an estimate of the state of education in England at that time, if we consider that the universities were, in the middle ages, frequented by younger students, who in modern times do not quit school till their 18th year.

fell in to the church from all quarters. The sittings of Parliament, of the King's Bench, and of most of the other courts, were suspended as long as the malady raged. The laws of peace availed not during the dominion of death. Pope Clement took advantage of this state of disorder, to adjust the bloody quarrel between Edward III. and Philip VI.; yet he only succeeded during the period that the plague commanded peace. Philip's death (1350) annulled all treaties; and it is related, that Edward, with other troops indeed, but with the same leaders and knights, again took the field. Ireland was much less heavily visited than England. The disease seems to have scarcely reached the mountainous districts of that kingdom; and Scotland too would, perhaps, have remained free, had not the Scots availed themselves of the discomfiture of the English, to make an irruption into their territory, which terminated in the destruction of their army, by the plague and

by the sword, and the extension of the pestilence, through those who escaped, over the whole country.

At the commencement, there was in England a superabundance of all the necessaries of life; but the plague, which seemed then to be the sole disease, was soon accompanied by a fatal murrain among cattle. Wandering about without herdsmen, they fell by thousands; and, as has likewise been observed in Africa, the birds and beasts of prey are said not to have touched them. Of what nature this murrain may have been, can no more be determined, than whether it originated from communication with plague patients, or from other causes; but thus much is certain, that it did not break out until after the commencement of the Black Death. In consequence of this murrain, and the impossibility of removing the corn from the fields, there was every where a great rise in the price of food, which to many was inexplicable, because the harvest

had been plentiful; by others it was attributed to the wicked designs of the labourers and dealers; but it had its foundation in the actual deficiency, arising from circumstances by which individual classes at all times endeavour to profit. For a whole year, until it terminated in August, 1349, the Black Plague prevailed in this beautiful island, and every where poisoned the springs of comfort and prosperity.*

In other countries, it generally lasted only half a year, but returned frequently in individual places; on which account, some, without sufficient proof, assigned to it a period of seven years.†

Spain was uninteruptedly ravaged by the Black Plague till after the year 1350, to which the frequent internal feuds and the wars with the Moors not a little contributed. Alphonso XI., whose passion for war carried him too far, died of it at

* *Barnes* and *Wood*. Loc. cit.

† *Gobelin Person*. in *Meibom*. Loc. cit.

the siege of Gibraltar, on the 26th of March, 1350. He was the only king in Europe who fell a sacrifice to it; but even before this period, inumerable families had been thrown into affliction.* The mortality seems otherwise to have been smaller in Spain than in Italy, and about as considerable as in France.

The whole period during which the Black Plague raged with destructive violence in Europe, was, with the exception of Russia, from the year 1347 to 1350. The plagues, which in the sequel often returned until the year 1383,† we do not consider as belonging to "the Great Mortality." They were rather common

* *Juan de Mariana.* Historia General de España. Illustrated by Don *José Sabau y Blanco.* Tom. IX. Madrid: 1819, 8vo. Libro XVI. p. 225. Don *Diego Ortiz de Zuñiga,* Annales ecclesiasticos y seculares de Sevilla. Madrid: 1795, 4to. T. II. p. 121. Don *Juan de Ferreras,* Historia de España. Madrid: 1721. T. VII. p. 353.

† *Gobelin Person.* Loc. cit. *V. Chalin,* p. 53.

pestilences, without inflammation of the lungs, such as in former times, and in the following centuries, were excited by the matter of contagion everywhere existing, and which, on every favorable occasion, gained ground anew, as is usually the case with this frightful disease.

The concourse of large bodies of people was especially dangerous; and thus, the premature celebration of the Jubilee, to which Clement VI. cited the faithful to Rome, (1350), during the great epidemic, caused a new eruption of the plague, from which it is said, that scarcely one in an hundred of the pilgrims escaped.*

Italy was, in consequence, depopulated anew; and those who returned, spread poison and corruption of morals in all directions.† It is, therefore, the less apparent, how that Pope, who was in

* *Guillelm de Nangis.* Loc. cit.

† *Spangenberg.* fol. 337. b. Limburg. Chronic. p. 20. "Und die auch von Rom kamen, wurden eines Theils böser als sie vor gewesen waren."

general so wise and considerate, and who knew how to pursue the path of reason and humanity, under the most difficult circumstances, should have been led to adopt a measure so injurious; since he, himself, was so convinced of the salutary effect of seclusion, that during the plague in Avignon, he kept up constant fires, and suffered no one to approach him;* and, in other respects, gave such orders as averted, or alleviated, much misery.

The changes which occurred about this period in the north of Europe, are sufficiently memorable to claim a few moments attention. In Sweden, two princes died—Häken and Knut, half-brothers of King Magnus; and in Westgothland alone, 466 priests.† The inhabitants of Iceland and Greenland, found in the coldness of their inhospitable climate, no protection against the southern enemy who had penetrated to

* *Guillelm de Nangis.* Loc. cit. and many others.

† *Dalin's* Svea Rikes Historie, Vol. II. c. xii. p. 496.

them from happier countries. The plague caused great havoc among them. Nature made no allowance for their constant warfare with the elements, and the parsimony with which she had meted out to them the enjoyments of life.* In Denmark and Norway, however, people were so occupied with their own misery, that the accustomed voyages to Greenland ceased. Towering ice-bergs formed at the same time on the coast of East Greenland, in consequence of the general concussion of the earth's organism; and no mortal, from that time forward, has ever seen that shore or its inhabitants.†

It has been observed above, that in

* *Saabye*. Tagebuch in Grönland. Einleit. XVIII.—*Torfaei* Histor. Norveg. Tom. IV. L. IX, c. viii. p. 478-79. *F. G. Mansa*, De epidemiis maxime memorabilibus quæ in Dania Grassatæ sunt, et de Medicinæ statu. Partic. I. Havn. 1831, 8vo. p. 12.

† *Torfaei* Groenlandia antiqua, s. veteris Groenlandiæ descriptio. Havniæ, 1715, 8vo. p. 23—*Potan*. Rer. danicar. Histor. Amstelod. 1631, fol. L. VII. p. 476.

Russia, the Black Plague did not break out until 1351, after it had already passed through the south and north of Europe. In this country also, the mortality was extraordinarily great; and the same scenes of affliction and despair were exhibited, as had occurred in those nations which had already passed the ordeal. The same mode of burial—the same horrible certainty of death—the same torpor and depression of spirits. The wealthy abandoned their treasures, and gave their villages and estates to the churches and monasteries; this being, according to the notions of the age, the surest way of securing the favor of Heaven and the forgiveness of past sins. In Russia too, the voice of nature was silenced by fear and horror. In the hour of danger, fathers and mothers deserted their children, and children their parents.*

Of all the estimates of the number of

* *Richter*, Loc. cit.

lives lost in Europe, the most probable is, that altogether, a fourth part of the inhabitants were carried off. Now, if Europe at present contain 210,000,000 inhabitants, the population, not to take a higher estimate, which might easily be justified, amounted to at least 105,000,000, in the 16th century.

It may, therefore, be assumed, without exaggeration, that Europe lost during the Black Death, 25,000,000 of inhabitants.

That her nations could so quickly overcome such a fearful concussion in their external circumstances, and, in general, without retrogading more than they actually did, could so develope their energies in the following century, is a most convincing proof of the indestructibility of human society as a whole. To assume, however, that it did not suffer any essential change internally, because in appearance every thing remained as before, is inconsistent with a just view of cause and effect. Many historians seem to have adopted such an

opinion; accustomed, as usual, to judge of the moral condition of the people solely according to the vicissitudes of earthly power, the events of battles, and the influence of religion, but to pass over with indifference, the great phenomena of nature, which modify, not only the surface of the earth, but also the human mind. Hence, most of them have touched but superficially on the "great mortality" of the 14th century. We, for our parts are convinced, that in the history of the world, the Black Death is one of the most important events which have prepared the way for the present state of Europe.

He who studies the human mind with attention, and forms a deliberate judgment on the intellectual powers which set people and states in motion, may, perhaps, find some proofs of this assertion in the following observations:—at that time, the advancement of the hierarchy was, in most countries, extraordinary; for the church acquired treasures and large properties in

land, even to a greater extent than after the crusades; but experience has demonstrated, that such a state of things is ruinous to the people, and causes them to retrograde, as was evinced on this occasion.

After the cessation of the Black Plague, a greater fertility in women was everywhere remarkable—a grand phenomenon, which, from its occurrence after every destructive pestilence, proves to conviction, if any occurrence can do so, the prevalence of a higher power in the direction of general organic life. Marriages were, almost without exception, prolific; and double and treble births were more frequent than at other times; under which head, we should remember the strange remark, that after the "great mortality" the children were said to have got fewer teeth than before; at which, contemporaries were mightily shocked, and even later writers have felt surprise.

If we examine the grounds of this oft-repeated assertion, we shall find that they

were astonished, to see children cut twenty, or at most, twenty-two teeth, under the supposition that a greater number had formerly fallen to their share.* Some writers of authority, as, for example, the physician Savonarola,† at Ferrara, who probably looked for twenty-eight teeth in children, published their opinions on this subject. Others copied from them, without seeing for themselves, as often happens in other matters which are equally evident; and thus the world believed in the miracle of an imperfection in the human body which had been caused by the Black Plague.

The people gradually consoled themselves after the sufferings which they had undergone; the dead were lamented and forgotten; and in the stirring vicissitudes

* We may take this view of the subject from *Guillelm de Nangis* and *Barnes*, if we read them *with attention*. *Olof Dalin*, Loc. cit.

† Practica de aegritudinibus a capite usque ad pedes. Papiae. 1486, fol. Tract, VI. c. vii.

of existence, the world belonged to the living.*

* "Darnach, da das Sterben, die Geiselfarth, Römerfarth, Judenschlacht, als vorgeschrieben steht, ein End hatte, da hub die Welt wieder an zu leben und fröhlich zu seyn, und machten die Männer neue Kleidung." Limburg Chronik, p. 26. After this when, as was stated before, the mortality, the processions of the Flagellants, the expeditions to Rome, and the massacre of the Jews, were at an end, the world begun to revive and be joyful, and the people put on new clothing.

CHAPTER V.

Moral Effects.

The mental shock sustained by all nations during the prevalence of the Black Plague, is without parallel and beyond description. In the eyes of the timorous, danger was the certain harbinger of death; many fell victims to fear, on the first appearance of the distemper,* and the most stout hearted lost their confidence. Thus, after reliance on the future had died away, the spiritual union which binds man to his family and his fellow creatures, was gradually dissolved. The pious closed their accounts with the world,—eternity presented itself to their view,—their only

* *Chalin*, Loc. cit. p. 92. *Detmar's* Lübeck Chronicle, T. I. p. 401.

remaining desire, was for a participation in the consolations of religion, because to them death was disarmed of its sting.

Repentance seized the transgressor, admonishing him to consecrate his remaining hours to the exercise of Christian virtues. All minds were directed to the contemplation of futurity; and children, who manifest the more elevated feelings of the soul without alloy, were frequently seen, while labouring under the plague, breathing out their spirit with prayer and songs of thanksgiving.*

* Chronic. *Ditmari*, Episcop. Mersepurg, Francof. 1580, fol. p. 358.——"*Spangenberg*, p. 338. The lamentation was pitiful; and the only remaining solace, was the prevalent anxiety, inspired by the danger, to prepare for a glorious departure; no other hope remained — death appeared inevitable. Many were hence induced to search into their own hearts, to turn to God, and to abandon their wicked courses: parents warned their children, and instructed them how to pray, and to submit to the ways of Providence: neighbours mutually admonished each other; none could reckon on a single hour's respite. Many persons, and even

An awful sense of contrition seized Christians of every communion; they resolved to forsake their vices—to make restitution for past offences, before they were summoned hence — to seek reconciliation with their Maker, and to avert, by self-chastisement, the punishment due to their former sins. Human nature would be exalted, could the countless noble actions, which, in times of most imminent danger, were performed in secret, be recorded for the instruction of future generations. They, however, have no influence on the course of worldly events. They are known only to silent eye-witnesses, and soon fall into oblivion. But hypocrisy, illusion and bigotry, stalk abroad undaunted; they desecrate what is noble—they pervert what is divine, to the unholy purposes of selfishness; which hurries along every good feeling in the false

young children, were seen bidding farewell to the world; some with prayer, others with praises on their lips."

excitement of the age. Thus it was in the years of this plague. In the 14th century, the monastic system was still in its full vigour,—the power of the ecclesiastical orders and brotherhoods, was revered by the people, and the hierarchy was still formidable to the temporal power. It was, therefore, in the natural constitution of society that bigotted zeal, which in such times makes a shew of public acts of penance, should avail itself of the semblance of religion. But this took place in such a manner, that unbridled, self-willed penitence, degenerated into luke-warmness, renounced obedience to the hierarchy, and prepared a fearful opposition to the church, paralysed by antiquated forms.

While all countries were filled with lamentations and woe, there first arose in Hungary,* and afterwards in Germany,

* *Torfaei* Hist. rer. Norvegic, L. IX. c. viii. p. 478. (Havn. 1711, fol.) *Die Cronica van der hilliger stat*

the Brotherhood of the Flagellants, called also the Brethren of the Cross, or Cross-bearers, who took upon themselves the repentance of the people, for the sins they had committed, and offered prayers and supplications for the averting of this plague. This Order consisted chiefly of persons of the lower class, who were either actuated by sincere contrition, or, who joyfully availed themselves of this pretext for idleness, and were hurried along with the tide of distracting frenzy. But, as these brotherhoods gained in repute, and were welcomed by the people with veneration and enthusiasm, many nobles and ecclesiastics ranged themselves under their standard; and their bands were not unfrequently augmented by children, honour-

van Coellen, off dat tzytboich, Coellen, 1499, fol. p. 263. "*In dem vurss jair erhoiff sich eyn alzo wunderlich nuwe Geselschaft in Ungarien.*" &c. The Chronicle of the holy city of Cologne, 1499. In this same year, a very remarkable Society was formed in Hungary.

able women and nuns; so powerfully were minds of the most opposite temperaments enslaved by this infatuation.* They marched through the cities, in well-organized processions, with leaders and singers; their heads covered as far as the eyes; their look fixed on the ground, accompanied by every token of the deepest contrition and mourning. They were robed in sombre garments, with red crosses on the breast, back, and cap, and bore triple scourges, tied in three or four knots, in which points of iron were fixed. Tapers and magnificent banners of velvet and cloth of gold, were carried before them;

* *Albert. Argentinens.* Chronic. p. 149, in *Chr. Urstisius.* Germaniae historicorum illustrium Tomus unus. Francof. 1585, fol.—*Guillelm de Nang.* Loc. cit.—See also the Saxon Chronicle, by *Mattheus Dresseren*, Physician and Professor at Leipsig, Wittenberg, 1596, fol. p. 340; the above-named Limburg Chronicle, and the Germaniae Chronicon, on the origin, name, commerce, &c., of all the Teutonic Nations of Germany: by *Seb. Francken*, of Wörd. Tubingen, 1534, fol. p. 201.

wherever they made their appearance, they were welcomed by the ringing of the bells; and the people flocked from all quarters, to listen to their hymns and to witness their penance, with devotion and tears.' In the year 1349, two hundred Flagellants first entered Strasburg, where they were received with great joy, and hospitably lodged by the citizens. Above a thousand joined the brotherhood, which now assumed the appearance of a wandering tribe, and separated into two bodies, for the purpose of journeying to the north and to the south. For more than half a year, new parties arrived weekly; and, on each arrival, adults and children left their families to accompany them; till, at length, their sanctity was questioned, and the doors of houses and churches were closed against them.* At Spires, two hundred boys, of twelve years of age and under, constituted themselves

* *Königshoven*, Elsassische und Strassburgische Chronicke. Loc cit. p. 297.

into a Brotherhood of the Cross, in imitation of the children, who, about a hundred years before, had united, at the instigation of some fanatic monks, for the purpose of recovering the Holy Sepulchre. All the inhabitants of this town, were carried away by the illusion; they conducted the strangers to their houses with songs of thanksgiving, to regale them for the night. The women embroidered banners for them, and all were anxious to augment their pomp; and at every succeeding pilgrimage, their influence and reputation increased.* It was not merely some individual parts of the country that fostered them: all Germany, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, Silesia, and Flanders, did homage to the mania; and they at length became as formidable to the secular, as they were to the ecclesiastical power. The influence of this fanaticism, was great and threatening;

* *Albert Argentin.* Loc. cit. They never remained longer than one night at any place.

resembling the excitement which called all the inhabitants of Europe into the deserts of Syria and Palestine, about two hundred and fifty years before. The appearance, in itself, was not novel. As far back as the 11th century, many believers, in Asia and Southern Europe, afflicted themselves with the punishment of flagellation. Dominicus Loricatus, a monk of St. Croce d'Avellano, is mentioned as the master and model of this species of mortification of the flesh; which, according to the primitive notions of the Asiatic Anchorites, was deemed eminently Christian. The author of the solemn processions of the Flagellants, is said to have been St. Anthony; for even in his time (1231), this kind of penance was so much in vogue, that it is recorded as an eventful circumstance in the history of the world. In 1260, the Flagellants appeared in Italy as *Devoti*. "When the land was polluted by vices and crimes,* an un-

* Words of *Monachus Paduanus*, quoted in Förstemann's Treatise, which is the best upon this subject.—See p. 60.

exampled spirit of remorse suddenly seized the minds of the Italians. The fear of Christ fell upon all: noble and ignoble, old and young, and even children of five years of age, marched through the streets with no covering but a scarf round the waist. They each carried a scourge of leathern thongs, which they applied to their limbs, amid sighs and tears, with such violence, that the blood flowed from the wounds. Not only during the day, but even by night, and in the severest winter, they traversed the cities with burning torches and banners, in thousands and tens of thousands, headed by their priests, and prostrated themselves before the altars. They proceeded in the same manner in the villages; and the woods and mountains resounded with the voices of those whose cries were raised to God. The melancholy chaunt of the penitent alone, was heard. Enemies were reconciled; men and women vied with each other in splendid works of charity, as if they dreaded, that Divine Omnipotence

would pronounce on them the doom of annihilation."

The pilgrimages of the Flagellants extended throughout all the provinces of Southern Germany, as far as Saxony, Bohemia and Poland, and even further; but at length, the priests resisted this dangerous fanaticism, without being able to extirpate the illusion, which was advantageous to the hierarchy, as long as it submitted to its sway. Regnier, a hermit of Perugia, is recorded as a fanatic preacher of penitence, with whom the extravagance originated.* In the year 1296, there was a great procession of the Flagellants in Strasburg;† and in 1334, fourteen years before the great mortality, the sermon of Venturinus, a Dominican friar, of Bergamo, induced above 10,000 persons to undertake a new pilgrimage. They scourged themselves in the churches, and were entertained in the market-places, at the

* *Schnurrer*, Chronicle of the Plagues, T. I. p. 291.
† Königshoven. Loc.cit.

public expense. At Rome, Venturinus was derided, and banished by the Pope to the mountains of Ricondona. He patiently endured all—went to the Holy Land, and died at Smyrna, 1346.* Hence we see that this fanaticism was a mania of the middle ages, which, in the year 1349, on so fearful an occasion, and while still so fresh in remembrance, needed no new founder; of whom, indeed, all the records are silent. It probably arose in many places at the same time; for the terror of death, which pervaded all nations and sud-

* *Förstemann*, Loc. cit. The pilgrimages of the Flagellants of the year 1349, were not the last. Later in the 14th century, this fanaticism still manifested itself several times, though never to so great an extent: in the 15th century, it was deemed necessary, in several parts of Germany, to extirpate them by fire and sword;—and in the year 1710, processions of the Cross-bearers were still seen in Italy. How deep this mania had taken root, is proved by the deposition of a citizen of Nordhäusen (1446): that his wife, in the belief of performing a Christian act, wanted to scourge her children, as soon as they were baptized.

denly set such powerful impulses in motion, might easily conjure up the fanaticism of exaggerated and overpowering repentance.

The manner and proceedings of the Flagellants of the 13th and 14th centuries, exactly resemble each other. But, if during the Black Plague, simple credulity came to their aid, which seized, as a consolation, the grossest delusion of religious enthusiasm, yet it is evident that the leaders must have been intimately united, and have exercised the power of a secret association. Besides, the rude band was generally under the controul of men of learning, some of whom at least, certainly had other objects in view, independent of those which ostensibly appeared. Whoever was desirous of joining the brotherhood, was bound to remain in it thirty-four days, and to have four-pence per day at his own disposal, so that he might not be burthensome to any one; if married, he was obliged to have the sanction of his wife, and give the assurance that he was recon-

ciled to all men. The Brothers of the Cross, were not permitted to seek for free quarters, or even to enter a house without having been invited; they were forbidden to converse with females; and if they transgressed these rules, or acted without precaution, they were obliged to confess to the Superior, who sentenced them to several lashes of the scourge, by way of penance. Ecclesiastics had not, as such, any pre-eminence among them; according to their original law, which, however, was often trangressed, they could not become Masters, or take part in the *Secret Councils*. Penance was performed twice every day: in the morning and evening, they went abroad in pairs, singing psalms, amid the ringing of the bells; and when they arrived at the place of flagellation, they stripped the upper part of their bodies and put off their shoes, keeping on only a linen dress, reaching from the waist to the ancles. They then lay down in a large circle, in different positions, according to the nature of their crime:

the adulterer with his face to the ground; the perjurer on one side, holding up three of his fingers, &c., and were then castigated, some more and some less, by the Master, who ordered them to rise in the words of a prescribed form.* Upon this, they scourged themselves, amid the singing of psalms and loud supplications for the averting of the plague, with genuflexions, and other ceremonies, of which contemporary writers give various accounts; and at the same time constantly boasted of their penance, that the blood of their wounds was mingled with that of the Saviour.† One of them, in conclusion, stood up to read a letter, which it was pretended an angel had brought from heaven, to St. Peter's church, at Jerusalem, stating that Christ, who was sore displeased at the sins of man, had granted at the intercession of the

* *Königshoven*, p. 298:

"*Stant uf durch der reinen Martel ere;*
Und hüte dich vor der Sünden mere."

† *Guill. de Nang.* Loc. cit.

Holy Virgin and of the angels, that all who should wander about for thirty-four days and scourge themselves, should be partakers of the Divine grace.* This scene caused as great a commotion among the believers as the finding of the holy spear once did at Antioch; and if any among the clergy enquired who had sealed the letter? he was boldly answered, the same who had sealed the Gospel!

All this had so powerful an effect, that the church was in considerable danger; for the Flagellants gained more credit than the priests, from whom they so entirely withdrew themselves, that they even absolved each other. Besides, they everywhere took possession of the churches, and their new songs, which went from mouth to mouth, operated strongly on the minds of the people. Great enthusiasm and originally pious feelings, are clearly distinguishable in these hymns, and espe-

* *Albert Argentinens.* Loc. cit.

cially in the chief psalm of the Cross-bearers, which is still extant, and which was sung all over Germany, in different dialects, and is probably of a more ancient date.* Degeneracy, however, soon crept in; crimes were everywhere committed; and there was no energetic man capable

* We meet with fragments of different lengths in the Chronicles of the times, but the only entire MS. which we possess, is in the valuable Library of President von Meusebach. Massmann has had this printed, accompanied by a translation, entitled *Erläuterungen zum Wessobrunner Gebet des 8ten Jahrhunderts. Nebst* ZWEIEN *noch ungedruckten*, GEDICHTEN DES VIERZEHNTEN JAHRHUNDERTS, Berlin, 1824. "Elucidation of the Wessobrunn Prayer of the 8th century, together with two unpublished Hymns of the 14th century." We shall subjoin it at the end of this Treatise, as a striking document of the age. The Limburg Chronicle asserts, indeed, that it was not composed till that time, although a part, if not the whole, of it, was sung in the procession of the Flagellants, in 1260.—See, Incerti auctoris Chronicon rerum per Austriam Vicinasque regiones gestarum inde ab anno 1025, usque ad annum 1282, Munich, 1827-8, p. 9.

of directing the individual excitement to purer objects, even had an effectual resistance to the tottering church been at that early period seasonable, and had it been possible to restrain the fanaticism. The Flagellants sometimes undertook to make trial of their power of working miracles; as in Strasburg, where they attempted, in their own circle, to resuscitate a dead child: they however failed, and their unskilfulness did them much harm, though they succeeded here and there in maintaining some confidence in their holy calling, by pretending to have the power of casting out evil spirits.*

The Brotherhood of the Cross announced that the pilgrimage of the Flagellants was to continue for a space of thirty-four years; and many of the Masters had, doubtless, determined to form a lasting league against the church; but they had gone too far. Already, in the same year,

* *Trithem.* Annal. Hirsaugiens, T. II. p. 206.

the general indignation set bounds to their intrigues; so that the strict measures adopted by the Emperor Charles IV. and Pope Clement,* who, throughout the whole of this fearful period, manifested prudence and noble-mindedness, and conducted himself in a manner every way worthy of his high station, were easily put into execution.†

The Sorbonne, at Paris, and the Emperor Charles, had already applied to the Holy See, for assistance against these formidable and heretical excesses, which had well nigh destroyed the influence of the clergy in every place; when a hundred of the Brotherhood of the Cross arrived at Avignon from Basle, and desired admission.

* He issued a bull against them, Oct. 20, 1349. *Raynald. Trithem.* Loc. cit.

† But as they at last ceased to excite astonishment, were no longer welcomed by the ringing of bells, and were not received with veneration, as before, they vanished as human imaginations are wont to do. Saxon Chronicle, by *Matt. Dresseren.* Wittenberg, 1596, fol. p. 340-341.

The Pope, regardless of the intercession of several cardinals, interdicted their public penance, which he had not authorized; and, on pain of excommunication, prohibited throughout Christendom the continuance of these pilgrimages.* Philip VI., supported by the condemnatory judgment of the Sorbonne, forbid their reception in France.† Manfred, King of Sicily, at the same time threatened them with punishment by death: and in the East, they were withstood by several bishops, among whom was Janussius, of Gnesen,‡ and Preczlaw, of Breslaw, who condemned to death one of their Masters, formerly a deacon; and, in conformity with the barbarity of the times, had him publicly burnt.§ In Westphalia, where so shortly

* *Albert Argentinens.* Loc. cit.

† *Guillelm de Nangis.*

‡ *Ditmar.* Loc. cit.

§ *Klose* of *Breslaw's* Documental History and Description, 8vo. Vol. II. p. 190. Breslaw, 1781.

before, they had venerated the Brothers of the Cross, they now persecuted them with relentless severity ;* and in the Mark, as well as in all the other countries of Germany, they pursued them, as if they had been the authors of every misfortune.†

The processions of the Brotherhood of the Cross, undoubtedly promoted the spreading of the plague; and it is evident, that the gloomy fanaticism which gave rise to them, would infuse a new poison into the already desponding minds of the people.

Still, however, all this was within the bounds of barbarous enthusiasm; but horrible were the persecutions of the Jews, which were committed in most countries, with even greater exasperation than in the 12th century, during the first Crusades. In every destructive pestilence, the common people at first attribute the mortality to

* Limburg Chronicle, p. 17.

† *Kehrberg's* Description of Königsberg, *i. e.* Neumark, 1724, 4to. p. 240.

poison. No instruction avails; the supposed testimony of their eyesight, is to them a proof, and they authoritatively demand the victims of their rage. On whom then was it so likely to fall, as on the Jews, the usurers and the strangers who lived at enmity with the Christians? They were everywhere suspected of having poisoned the wells or infected the air.* They alone were considered as having brought this fearful mortality among the Christians.† They were, in consequence, pursued with merciless cruelty; and either indiscriminately given up to the fury of the populace, or sentenced by sanguinary

* So says the Polish historian *Dlugoss*, Loc. cit., while most of his contemporaries, mention only the poisoning of the wells. It is evident, that in the state of their feelings, it mattered little to them to add another still more formidable accusation.

† In those places where no Jews resided, as in Leipsig, Magdeburg, Brieg, Frankenstein, &c. the gravediggers were accused of the crime.—V. *Möhsen's* History of the Sciences in the March of Brandenburg, T. II. p. 265.

tribunals, which, with all the forms of law, ordered them to be burnt alive. In times like these, much is indeed said of guilt and innocence; but hatred and revenge bear down all discrimination, and the smallest probability, magnifies suspicion into certainty. These bloody scenes, which disgraced Europe in the 14th century, are a counterpart to a similar mania of the age, which was manifested in the persecutions of witches and sorcerers; and, like these, they prove, that enthusiasm, associated with hatred, and leagued with the baser passions, may work more powerfully upon whole nations, than religion and legal order; nay, that it even knows how to profit by the authority of both, in order the more surely to satiate with blood, the sword of long suppressed revenge.

The persecution of the Jews, commenced in September and October, 1348,* at Chillon, on the Lake of Geneva, where

* See the original proceedings, in the Appendix.

the first criminal proceedings were instituted against them, after they had long before been accused by the people of poisoning the wells; similar scenes followed in Bern and Freyburg, in January, 1349. Under the influence of excruciating suffering, the tortured Jews confessed themselves guilty of the crime imputed to them; and it being affirmed that poison had in fact been found in a well at Zoffingen, this was deemed a sufficient proof to convince the world; and the persecution of the abhorred culprits, thus appeared justifiable. Now, though we can take as little exception at these proceedings, as at the multifarious confessions of witches, because the interrogatories of the fanatic and sanguinary tribunals, were so complicated, that by means of the rack, the required answer must inevitably be obtained; and it is besides conformable to human nature, that crimes which are in every body's mouth, may, in the end, be actually committed by some, either from wantonness,

revenge, or desperate exasperation: yet crimes and accusations, are, under circumstances like these, merely the offspring of a revengeful, frenzied, spirit in the people; and the accusers, according to the fundamental principles of morality, which are the same in every age, are the more guilty transgressors.

Already in the autumn of 1348, a dreadful panic, caused by the supposed poisoning, seized all nations; and in Germany especially, the springs and wells were built over, that nobody might drink of them, or employ the water for culinary purposes; and for a long time, the inhabitants of numerous towns and villages, used only river and rain water.* The city gates were also guarded with the greatest

* *Hermanni Gygantis* Flores temporum, sive Chronicon Universale—*Ed. Meuschen.* Lugdun, Bat. 1743. 4to. p. 139. Hermann, a Franciscan monk of Franconia, who wrote in the year 1349, was an eye-witness of the most revolting scenes of vengeance, throughout all Germany.

caution,—only confidential persons were admitted; and if medicine, or any other article, which might be supposed to be poisonous, was found in the possession of a stranger,—and it was natural that some should have these things by them for their private use,—they were forced to swallow a portion of it.* By this trying state of privation, distrust and suspicion, the hatred against the supposed poisoners, became greatly increased, and often broke out in popular commotions, which only served still further to infuriate the wildest passions. The noble and the mean, fearlessly bound themselves by an oath, to extirpate the Jews by fire and sword, and to snatch them from their protectors, of whom the number was so small, that throughout all Germany, but few places can be mentioned where these unfortunate people were not regarded as outlaws—

* *Guid. Cauliac.* Loc. cit.

† *Hermann.* Loc. cit.

martyred and burnt.† Solemn summonses were issued from Bern to the towns of Basle, Freyburg in the Breisgau, and Strasburg, to pursue the Jews as poisoners. The Burgomasters and Senators, indeed, opposed this requisition; but in Basle the populace obliged them to bind themselves by an oath, to burn the Jews, and to forbid persons of that community from entering their city, for the space of two hundred years. Upon this, all the Jews in Basle, whose number could not have been inconsiderable, were enclosed in a wooden building, constructed for the purpose, and burnt together with it, upon the mere outcry of the people, without sentence or trial, which indeed would have availed them nothing. Soon after, the same thing took place at Freyburg. A regular Diet was held at Bennefeld, in Alsace, where the bishops, lords and barons, as also deputies of the counts (*query* counties?) and towns, consulted how they should proceed with regard to the Jews; and when

the deputies of Strasburg—not indeed the bishop of this town, who proved himself a violent fanatic—spoke in favor of the persecuted, as nothing criminal was substantiated against them; a great outcry was raised, and it was vehemently asked, why, if so, they had covered their wells and removed their buckets? A sanguinary decree was resolved upon, of which the populace, who obeyed the call of the nobles and superior clergy, became but the too willing executioners.* Wherever the Jews were not burnt, they were at least banished; and so being compelled to wander about, they fell into the hands of the country people, who without humanity, and regardless of all laws, persecuted them with fire and sword. At Spires, the Jews, driven to despair, assembled in their own habitations, which they set on fire, and thus consumed themselves with their families. The few

* *Albert Argentin.—Königshoven,* Loc. cit.

that remained, were forced to submit to baptism; while the dead bodies of the murdered, which lay about the streets, were put into empty wine casks, and rolled into the Rhine, lest they should infect the air. The mob was forbidden to enter the ruins of the habitations that were burnt in the Jewish quarter; for the senate itself caused search to be made for the treasure, which is said to have been very considerable. At Strasburg, two thousand Jews were burnt alive in their own burial ground, where a large scaffold had been erected: a few who promised to embrace Christianity, were spared, and their children taken from the pile. The youth and beauty of several females also excited some commiseration; and they were snatched from death against their will: many, however, who forcibly made their escape from the flames, were murdered in the streets.

The senate ordered all pledges and bonds

to be returned to the debtors, and divided the money among the work-people.* Many, however, refused to accept the base price of blood, and, indignant at the scenes of blood-thirsty avarice, which made the infuriated multitude forget† that the plague was raging around them, presented it to monastaries, in conformity with the advice of their confessors. In all the countries on the Rhine, these cruelties continued to be perpetrated during the succeeding months; and after quiet was in some degree restored, the people thought to render an acceptable service to God, by

* *Dies was ouch die Vergift, die die Juden döttete.* "This is also the poison that killed the Jews," observes *Königshoven*, which he illustrates by saying, that their increase in Germany was very great, and their mode of gaining a livelihood, which, however, was the only resource left them, had engendered ill-will against them in all quarters.

† Many wealthy Jews, for example, were, on their way to the stake, stripped of their garments, for the sake of the gold coin that was sewed in them.—*Albert Argentinens.*

taking the bricks of the destroyed dwellings, and the tombstones of the Jews, to repair churches and to erect belfreys.*

In Mayence alone, 12,000 Jews are said to have been put to a cruel death. The Flagellants entered that place in August; the Jews, on this occasion, fell out with the Christians, and killed several; but when they saw their inability to withstand the increasing superiority of their enemies, and that nothing could save them from destruction, they consumed themselves and their families, by setting fire to their dwellings. Thus also, in other places, the entry of the Flagellants gave rise to scenes of slaughter; and as thirst for blood was everywhere combined with an unbridled spirit of proselytism, a fanatic zeal arose among the Jews, to perish as martyrs to their ancient religion. And how was it possible, that they could from the heart embrace Christianity, when its

* Vide preceding note.

precepts were never more outrageously violated? At Eslingen, the whole Jewish community burned themselves in their synagogue;* and mothers were often seen throwing their children on the pile, to prevent their being baptised, and then precipitating themselves into the flames.† In short, whatever deeds, fanaticism, revenge, avarice and desperation, in fearful combination, could instigate mankind to perform, — and where in such a case is the limit? — were executed in the year 1349, throughout Germany, Italy and France, with impunity, and in the eyes of all the world. It seemed as if the plague gave rise to scandalous acts and frantic tumults, not to mourning and grief: and the greater part of those who, by their education and rank, were called upon to raise the voice of reason, themselves led on the savage mob to murder

* *Spangenberg.* Loc. cit.

† *Guillelm. de Nangis.—Dlugoss.* Loc. cit.

and to plunder. Almost all the Jews who saved their lives by baptism, were afterwards burnt at different times; for they continued to be accused of poisoning the water and the air. Christians also, whom philanthropy or gain had induced to offer them protection, were put on the rack and executed with them.* Many Jews who had embraced Christianity, repented of their apostacy,—and, returning to their former faith, sealed it with their death.†

The humanity and prudence of Clement VI., must, on this occasion, also be mentioned to his honor; but even the highest ecclesiastical power was insufficient to restrain the unbridled fury of the people. He not only protected the Jews at Avignon, as far as lay in his power, but also issued two bulls, in which he declared them innocent; and admonished all Christians, though without success, to cease from such

* *Albert. Argentinens.*

† *Spangenberg* describes a similar scene which took place at Kostnitz.

groundless persecutions.* The Emperor Charles IV. was also favourable to them, and sought to avert their destruction, wherever he could; but he dared not draw the sword of justice, and even found himself obliged to yield to the selfishness of the Bohemian nobles, who were unwilling to forego so favorable an opportunity of releasing themselves from their Jewish creditors, under favor of an imperial mandate.† Duke Albert of Austria burned and pillaged those of his cities, which had persecuted the Jews, — a vain and inhuman proceeding, which, moreover, is not exempt from the suspicion of covetousness; yet he was unable, in his own fortress of Kyberg, to protect some hundreds of Jews, who had been received there, from being barbarously burnt by the inhabitants.‡ Several other princes and

* *Guillelm de Nang.—Raynald.*

† Histor. Landgrav. *Thuring.* in *Pistor.* Loc. cit. Vol. I. p. 948.

‡ Anonym. *Leobiens,* in *Pez.* Loc. cit.

counts, among whom was Ruprecht von der Pfalz, took the Jews under their protection, on the payment of large sums: in consequence of which they were called "Jew-masters," and were in danger of being attacked by the populace and by their powerful neighbours.* These persecuted and ill-used people, except indeed where humane individuals took compassion on them at their own peril, or when they

* *Spangenberg.* In the county of Mark, the Jews were no better off than in the rest of Germany. Margrave *Ludwig*, the Roman, even countenanced their persecutions, of which *Kehrberg*, Loc. cit. 241. gives the following official account: Coram cunctis Christi fidelibus praesentia perecpturis, ego *Johannes* dictus *de Wedel* Advocatus, inclyti Principis Domini, *Ludovici*, Marchionis, publice profiteor et recognosco, quod nomine Domini mei civitaten Königsberg visitavi et intravi, et ex parte Domini Marchionis Consulibus ejusdem civitatis in adjutorium mihi assumtis, *Judaeos inibi morantes igne cremavi*, bonaque omnia eorundem Judaeorum ex parte Domini mei totaliter usurpavi et assumsi. In cujus testimonum praesentibus meum sigillum appendi. Datum A. D. 1351. in Vigilia S. Matthaei Apostoli.

could command riches to purchase protection, had no place of refuge left but the distant country of Lithuania, where Boleslav V., Duke of Poland (1227-1279), had before granted them liberty of conscience; and King Casimir the Great (1333-1370), yielding to the entreaties of Esther, a favourite Jewess, received them, and granted them further protection:* on which account, that country is still inhabited by a great number of Jews, who by their secluded habits, have, more than any people in Europe, retained the manners of the middle ages.

But to return to the fearful accusations against the Jews: it was reported in all Europe, that they were in connection with

* *Basnage* Histoire des Juifs. A la Haye, 1716. 8vo. T. IX. Pt. II. Liv. IX. ch. 23. §. 12-24. p. 664-679. This valuable work gives an interesting account of the state of the Jews of the middle ages. Compare *J. M. Jost's* History of the Israelites from the time of the Maccabees to the present day. T. VII. Berlin, 1827. 8vo. p. 8-262.

secret superiors in Toledo, to whose decrees they were subject, and from whom they had received commands respecting the coining of base money, poisoning, the murder of christian children, &c.;* that they received the poison by sea from remote parts, and also prepared it themselves from spiders, owls and other venomous animals; but, in order that their secret might not be discovered, that it was known only to their Rabbis and rich men.† Apparently there were but few who did not consider this extravagant accusation well founded; indeed, in many writings of the 14th century, we find great acrimony with regard to the suspected poison-mixers, which plainly demonstrates the prejudice existing against them. Unhappily, after the confessions of the first victims in Switzerland, the rack extorted similar ones in various places. Some even acknowledged having received

* *Albert Argentinens.*

† *Hermann. Gygas.* Loc. cit.

poisonous powder in bags, and injunctions from Toledo, by secret messengers. Bags of this description, were also often found in wells, though it was not unfrequently discovered that the Christians themselves had thrown them in; probably to give occasion to murder and pillage; similar instances of which may be found in the persecutions of the witches.*

* On this subject see *Königshoven*, who has preserved very valuable original proceedings. The most important are, the criminal examinations of ten Jews, at Chillon, on the Lake of Geneva, held in September and October, 1348.—V. Appendix. They produced the most strange confessions, and sanctioned, by the false name of justice, the blood-thirsty fanaticism which lighted the funeral piles. Copies of these proceedings were sent to Bern and Strasburg, where they gave rise to the first persecutions against the Jews.—V. also the original Document of the offensive and defensive Alliance between *Berthold von Götz*, Bishop of Strasburg, and many powerful lords and nobles, in favor of the city of Strasburg, against Charles IV. The latter saw himself compelled, in consequence, to grant to that city an amnesty for the Jewish persecutions, which in our days would be

This picture needs no additions. A lively image of the Black Plague, and of the moral evil which followed in its train, will vividly represent itself to him who is acquainted with nature and the constitution of society. Almost the only credible accounts of the manner of living, and of the ruin which occurred in private life, during this pestilence, are from Italy; and these may enable us to form a just estimate of the general state of families in Europe, taking into consideration what is peculiar in the manners of each country.

"When the evil had become universal," (speaking of Florence) "the hearts of all the inhabitants were closed to feelings of humanity. They fled from the sick and all that belonged to them, hoping by these means to save themselves. Others shut themselves up in their houses, with their wives, their children and households, living

deemed disgraceful to an imperial crown. Not to mention many other documents, which no less clearly shew the spirit of the 14th century, p. 1021. f.

on the most costly food, but carefully avoiding all excess. None were allowed access to them; no intelligence of death or sickness was permitted to reach their ear; and they spent their time in singing and music, and other pastimes. Others, on the contrary, considered eating and drinking to excess, amusements of all descriptions, the indulgence of every gratification, and an indifference to what was passing around them, as the best medicine, and acted accordingly. They wandered day and night, from one tavern to another, and feasted without moderation or bounds. In this way they endeavoured to avoid all contact with the sick, and abandoned their houses and property to chance, like men whose death-knell had already tolled.

Amid this general lamentation and woe, the influence and authority of every law, human and divine, vanished. Most of those who were in office, had been carried off by the plague, or lay sick, or had lost so many members of their families, that

they were unable to attend to their duties; so that thenceforth every one acted as he thought proper. Others, in their mode of living, chose a middle course. They ate and drank what they pleased, and walked abroad, carrying odoriferous flowers, herbs or spices, which they smelt to from time to time, in order to invigorate the brain, and to avert the baneful influence of the air, infected by the sick, and by the innumerable corpses of those who had died of the plague. Others carried their precaution still further, and thought the surest way to escape death was by flight. They therefore left the city; women as well men abandoning their dwellings and their relations, and retiring into the country. But of these also, many were carried off, most of them alone and deserted by all the world, themselves having previously set the example. Thus it was, that one citizen fled from another—a neighbour from his neighbours—a relation from his relations;—and in the end, so completely had

terror extinguished every kindlier feeling, that the brother forsook the brother—the sister the sister—the wife her husband; and at last, even the parent his own offspring, and abandoned them, unvisited and unsoothed, to their fate. Those, therefore, that stood in need of assistance fell a prey to greedy attendants; who for an exorbitant recompence, merely handed the sick their food and medicine, remained with them in their last moments, and then, not unfrequently, became themselves victims to their avarice and lived not to enjoy their extorted gain. Propriety and decorum were extinguished among the helpless sick. Females of rank seemed to forget their natural bashfulness, and committed the care of their persons, indiscriminately, to men and women of the lowest order. No longer were women, relatives or friends, found in the house of mourning, to share the grief of the survivors—no longer was the corpse accompanied to the grave by neighbours and a

numerous train of priests, carrying wax tapers and singing psalms, nor was it borne along by other citizens of equal rank. Many breathed their last without a friend to sooth their dying pillow; and few indeed were they who departed amid the lamentations and tears of their friends and kindred. Instead of sorrow and mourning, appeared indifference, frivolity and mirth; this being considered, especially by the females, as conducive to health. Seldom was the body followed by even ten or twelve attendants; and instead of the usual bearers and sextons, mercenaries of the lowest of the populace undertook the office for the sake of gain; and accompanied by only a few priests, and often without a single taper, it was borne to the very nearest church, and lowered into the first grave that was not already too full to receive it. Among the middling classes, and especially among the poor, the misery was still greater. Poverty or negligence induced most of

these to remain in their dwellings, or in the immediate neighbourhood; and thus they fell by thousands; and many ended their lives in the streets, by day and by night. The stench of putrefying corpses was often the first indication to their neighbours that more deaths had occurred. The survivors, to preserve themselves from infection, generally had the bodies taken out of the houses, and laid before the doors; where the early morn found them in heaps, exposed to the affrighted gaze of the passing stranger. It was no longer possible to have a bier for every corpse, — three or four were generally laid together — husband and wife, father and mother, with two or three children, were frequently borne to the grave on the same bier; and it often happened that two priests would accompany a coffin, bearing the cross before it, and be joined on the way by several other funerals; so that instead of one, there were five or six bodies for interment."

Thus far Boccacio. On the conduct of the priests, another contemporary observes:* "In large and small towns, they had withdrawn themselves through fear, leaving the performance of ecclesiastical duties to the few who were found courageous and faithful enough to undertake them." But we ought not on that account to throw more blame on them than on others; for we find proofs of the same timidity and heartlessness in every class. During the prevalence of the Black Plague, the charitable orders conducted themselves admirably, and did as much good as can be done by individual bodies, in times of great misery and destruction; when compassion, courage, and the nobler feelings, are found but in the few,—while cowardice, selfishness and ill-will, with the baser passions in their train—assert the supremacy. In place of virtue which had been driven from the earth, wickedness every-

* *Guillelm de Nangis.* p. 110.

where reared her rebellious standard, and succeeding generations were consigned to the dominion of her baleful tyranny.

CHAPTER VI.

Physicians.

If we now turn to the medical talent which encountered the "Great Mortality," the middle ages must stand excused, since even the moderns are of opinion that the art of medicine is not able to cope with the Oriental plague, and can afford deliverance from it only under particularly favorable circumstances.* We must bear in mind also, that human science and art, appear particularly weak in great pestilences, because they have to contend with the powers of nature, of which they have no knowledge; and which, if they had been, or could be comprehended in

* "Curationem omnem respuit pestis confirmata."—*Chalin*, p. 33.

their collective effects, would remain uncontrollable by them, principally on account of the disordered condition of human society. Moreover, every new plague has its peculiarities, which are the less easily discovered on first view, because, during its ravages, fear and consternation humble the proud spirit.

The physicians of the 14th century, during the Black Death, did what human intellect could do in the actual condition of the healing art; and their knowledge of the disease was by no means despicable. They, like the rest of mankind, have indulged in prejudices, and defended them, perhaps, with too much obstinacy: some of these, however, were founded in the mode of thinking of the age, and passed current in those days, as established truths: others continue to exist to the present hour.

Their successors in the 19th century, ought not therefore to vaunt too highly the pre-eminence of their knowledge, for

they too will be subjected to the severe judgment of posterity — they too, will, with reason, be accused of human weakness and want of foresight.

The medical faculty of Paris, the most celebrated of the 14th century, were commissioned to deliver their opinion on the causes of the Black Plague, together with some appropriate regulations with regard to living, during its prevalence. This document is sufficiently remarkable to find a place here.

"We, the Members of the College of Physicians, of Paris, have, after mature consideration and consultation on the present mortality, collected the advice of our old masters in the art, and intend to make known the causes of this pestilence, more clearly than could be done according to the rules and principles of astrology and natural science; we, therefore, declare as follows:—

"It is known that in India, and the vicinity of the Great Sea, the constella-

tions which combated the rays of the sun, and the warmth of the heavenly fire, exerted their power especially against that sea, and struggled violently with its waters. Hence, vapours often originate which envelope the sun, and convert his light into darkness. These vapours alternately rose and fell for twenty-eight days; but at last, sun and fire acted so powerfully upon the sea, that they attracted a great portion of it to themselves, and the waters of the ocean arose in the form of vapour; thereby the waters were in some parts, so corrupted, that the fish which they contained, died. These corrupted waters, however, the heat of the sun could not consume, neither could other wholesome water, hail or snow, and dew, originate therefrom. On the contrary, this vapour spread itself through the air in many places on the earth, and enveloped them in fog.

"Such was the case all over Arabia, in a part of India; in Crete; in the plains and

valleys of Macedonia; in Hungary; Albania and Sicily. Should the same thing occur in Sardinia, not a man will be left alive; and the like will continue, so long as the sun remains in the sign of Leo, on all the islands and adjoining countries to which this corrupted sea-wind extends, or has already extended from India. If the inhabitants of those parts do not employ and adhere to the following, or similar means and precepts, we announce to them inevitable death — except the grace of Christ preserve their lives.

"We are of opinion, that the constellations, with the aid of Nature, strive, by virtue of their divine might, to protect and heal the human race; and to this end, in union with the rays of the sun, acting through the power of fire, endeavour to break through the mist. Accordingly, within the next ten days, and until the 17th of the ensuing month of July, this mist will be converted into a stinking deleterious rain, whereby the air will be

much purified. Now, as soon as this rain announces itself, by thunder or hail, every one of you should protect himself from the air; and, as well before as after the rain, kindle a large fire of vine-wood, green laurel, or other green wood; worm-wood and chamomile should also be burnt in great quantity in the market places, in other densely inhabited localities, and in the houses. Until the earth is again completely dry, and for three days afterwards, no one ought to go abroad in the fields. During this time the diet should be simple, and people should be cautious in avoiding exposure in the cool of the evening, at night, and in the morning. Poultry and water-fowl, young pork, old beef, and fat meat, in general, should not be eaten; but on the contrary, meat of a proper age, of a warm and dry nature, by no means, however, heating and exciting. Broth should be taken, seasoned with ground pepper, ginger and cloves, especially by those who are accustomed to live temperately, and

are yet choice in their diet. Sleep in the day-time is detrimental; it should be taken at night until sun-rise, or somewhat longer. At breakfast, one should drink little; supper should be taken an hour before sun-set, when more may be drunk than in the morning. Clear light wine, mixed with a fifth or sixth part of water, should be used as a beverage. Dried or fresh fruits with wine are not injurious; but highly so without it. Beet-root and other vegetables, whether eaten pickled or fresh, are hurtful; on the contrary, spicy pot-herbs, as sage or rosemary, are wholesome. Cold, moist, watery food is, in general, prejudicial. Going out at night, and even until three o'clock in the morning, is dangerous, on account of the dew. Only small river fish should be used. Too much exercise is hurtful. The body should be kept warmer than usual, and thus protected from moisture and cold. Rain-water must not be employed in cooking, and every one should guard against exposure to wet

weather. If it rain, a little fine treacle should be taken after dinner. Fat people should not sit in the sunshine. Good clear wine should be selected and drunk often, but in small quantities, by day. Olive oil, as an article of food, is fatal. Equally injurious are fasting or excessive abstemiousness, anxiety of mind, anger, and excessive drinking. Young people, in autumn especially, must abstain from all these things, if they do not wish to run a risk of dying of dysentery. In order to keep the body properly open, an enema, or some other simple means, should be employed, when necessary. Bathing is injurious. Men must preserve chastity as they value their lives. Every one should impress this on his recollection, but espepecially those who reside on the coast, or upon an island into which the noxious wind has penetrated."*

* *Jacob. Francischini de Ambrosiis.* In the Appendix to the Istorie Pistolesi. *Muratori*, Tom. XI. p. 528.

On what occasion these strange precepts were delivered can no longer be ascertained, even if it were an object to know it. It must be acknowledged, however, that they do not redound to the credit either of the faculty of Paris, or of the 14th century in general. This famous faculty found themselves under the painful necessity of being wise at command, and of firing a point blank shot of erudition at an enemy who enveloped himself in a dark mist, of the nature of which they had no conception. In concealing their ignorance by authoritative assertions, they suffered themselves, therefore, to be misled; and while endeavouring to appear to the world with eclat, only betrayed to the intelligent their lamentable weakness. Now some might suppose, that in the condition of the sciences in the 14th century, no intelligent physicians existed; but this is altogether at variance with the laws of human advancement, and is contradicted by his-

tory. The real knowledge of an age, is only shown in the archives of its literature. Men of talent here alone deposit the results of their experience and reflection, without vanity or a selfish object:—here alone the genius of truth speaks audibly. There is no ground for believing that, in the 14th century, men of this kind were publicly questioned regarding their views; and it is, therefore, the more necessary that impartial history should take up their cause and do justice to their merits.

The first notice on this subject is due to a very celebrated teacher in Perugia, Gentilis of Foligno, who, on the 18th of June, 1348, fell a sacrifice to the plague, in the faithful discharge of his duty.* Attached to Arabian doctrines, and to the universally respected Galen, he, in common with all his contemporaries, believed in a putrid corruption of the blood in the

* *Gentilis de Fulgineo*, Consilia. De Peste cons. I. II. fol. 76. 77. Venet. 1514. fol.

lungs and in the heart, which was occasioned by the pestilential atmosphere, and was forthwith communicated to the whole body. He thought, therefore, that everything depended upon a sufficient purification of the air, by means of large blazing fires of odoriferous wood, in the vicinity of the healthy, as well as of the sick, and also upon an appropriate manner of living; so that the putridity might not overpower the diseased. In conformity with notions derived from the ancients, he depended upon bleeding and purging, at the commencement of the attack, for the purpose of purification; ordered the healthy to wash themselves frequently with vinegar or wine, to sprinkle their dwellings with vinegar, and to smell often to camphor, or other volatile substances. Hereupon he gave, after the Arabian fashion, detailed rules, with an abundance of different medicines, of whose healing powers wonderful things were believed. He laid little stress upon super-lunar influences, so far

as respected the malady itself; on which account, he did not enter into the great controversies of the astrologers, but always kept in view, as an object of medical attention, the corruption of the blood in the lungs and heart. He believed in a progressive infection from country to country, according to the notions of the present day; and the contagious power of the disease, even in the vicinity of those affected by plague, was, in his opinion, beyond all doubt.* On this point, intelligent contemporaries were all agreed; and in truth, it required no great genius to be convinced of so palpable a fact. Besides, correct notions of contagion have descended from remote antiquity, and were maintained unchanged in the 14th century.† So far back as the age of Plato,

* "Venenosa putredo circa partes cordis et pulmonis de quibus exeunte venenoso vapore, periculum est in vicinitatibus." Cons. I. fol. 76, a.

† *Dr. Maclean's* notion that the doctrine of contagion was first promulgated in the year 1547, by Pope

a knowledge of the contagious power of malignant inflammations of the eye, of which also no physician of the middle ages entertained a doubt,* was general among the people;† yet, in modern times, surgeons have filled volumes with partial controversies on this subject. The whole language of antiquity has adapted itself to the notions of the people, respecting the contagion of pestilential diseases; and their terms were, beyond comparison, more expressive than those in use among the moderns.‡

Arrangements for the protection of the healthy against contagious diseases, the

Paul III. &c., thus falls to the ground, together with all the arguments founded on it.—See *Maclean* on Epid. and Pestilent. Diseases, 8vo. 1817, Pt. II. Book II. ch. 3. 4.—*Transl. note.*

* Lippitudo contagione spectantium oculos afficit.—*Chalin de Vinario*, p. 149.

† See the Author's Geschichte der Heilkunde, Vol. II. P. III.

‡ Compare *Marx*, Origines contagii. Caroliruh. et Bad. 1824. 8.

necessity of which is shewn from these notions, were regarded by the ancients as useful; and by many, whose circumstances permitted it, were carried into effect in their houses. Even a total separation of the sick from the healthy, that indispensable means of protection against infection by contact, was proposed by physicians of the 2nd century after Christ, in order to check the spreading of leprosy. But it was decidedly opposed, because, as it was alleged, the healing art ought not to be guilty of such harshness.* This mildness of the ancients, in whose manner of thinking inhumanity was so often and so undisguisedly conspicuous, might excite surprise, if it were anything more than apparent. The true ground of the neglect of public protection against pestilential diseases, lay in the general

* *Cael. Aurelian.* Chron. L. IV. c. 1. p. 497. *Ed. Amman.* "Sed hi ægrotantem destituendum magis imperant, quam curandum, quod a se alienum humanitas approbat medicinæ."

notion and constitution of human society,— it lay in the disregard of human life, of which the great nations of antiquity have given proofs in every page of their history. Let it not be supposed that they wanted knowledge respecting the propagation of contagious diseases. On the contrary, they were as well informed on this subject as the moderns; but this was shewn where individual property, not where human life, on the grand scale, was to be protected. Hence the ancients made a general practice of arresting the progress of murrains among cattle, by a separation of the diseased from the healthy. Their herds alone enjoyed that protection which they held it impracticable to extend to human society, because they had no wish to do so.* That the governments in the 14th century, were not yet so far advanced, as to put into practice general regulations for checking the plague,

* *Geschichte der Heilkunde*, Vol. II. p. 248.

needs no especial proof. Physicians could, therefore, only advise public purifications of the air by means of large fires, as had often been practised in ancient times; and they were obliged to leave it to individual families, either to seek safety in flight, or to shut themselves up in their dwellings,* a method which answers in common plagues, but which here afforded no complete security, because such was the fury of the disease when it was at its height, that the atmosphere of whole cities was penetrated by the infection.

Of the astral influence which was considered to have originated the "Great Mortality," physicians and learned men

* *Chalin* assures us expressly, that many nunneries, by closing their gates, remained free from the contagion. It is worthy of note, and quite in conformity with the prevailing notions, that the continuance in a thick, moist atmosphere, was generally esteemed more advantageous and conservative, on account of its being more impenetrable to the astral influence, inasmuch as the inferior cause kept off the superior.—*Chalin*, p. 48.

were as completely convinced as of the fact of its reality. A grand conjunction of the three superior planets, Saturn, Jupiter and Mars, in the sign of Aquarius, which took place according to Guy de Chauliac, on the 24th of March, 1345, was generally received as its principal cause. In fixing the day, this physician, who was deeply versed in astrology, did not agree with others; whereupon there arose various disputations, of weight in that age, but of none in ours; people, however, agreed in this—that conjunctions of the planets infallibly prognosticated great events; great revolutions of kingdoms, new prophets, destructive plagues, and other occurrences which bring distress and horror on mankind. No medical author of the 14th and 15th century, omits an opportunity of representing them as among the general prognostics of great plagues; nor can we, for our parts, regard the astrology of the middle ages, as a mere offspring of superstition. It has not

only, in common with all ideas which inspire and guide mankind, a high historical importance, entirely independent of its error or truth—for the influence of both is equally powerful—but there are also contained in it, as in alchymy, grand thoughts of antiquity, of which modern natural philosophy is so little ashamed that she claims them as her property. Foremost among these, is the idea of the general life which diffuses itself throughout the whole universe, expressed by the greatest Greek sages, and transmitted to the middle ages, through the new Platonic natural philosophy. To this impression of an universal organism, the assumption of a reciprocal influence of terrestrial bodies could not be foreign,* nor did this cease to correspond with a higher view of nature, until astrologers overstepped the limits

* This was called *Affluxus*, or *Forma specifica*, and was compared to the effect of a magnet on iron, and of amber on chaff.—*Chalin de Vinario*, p. 23.

of human knowledge with frivolous and mystical calculations.

Guy de Chauliac, considers the influence of the conjunction, which was held to be all-potent, as the chief general cause of the Black Plague; the diseased state of bodies, the corruption of the fluids, debility, obstruction, and so forth, as the especial subordinate causes.* By these, according to his opinion, the quality of the air, and of the other elements, was so altered, that they set poisonous fluids in motion towards the inward parts of the body, in the same manner as the magnet attracts iron; whence there arose in the commencement fever and the spitting of blood; afterwards, however, a deposition in the form of glandular swellings and inflammatory boils. Herein the notion of an epidemic constitution was set forth, clearly and conformably, to the spirit of the age. Of contagion, Guy de

* Causa universalis agens—causa particularis patiens. To this correspond, in *Chalin*, the expressions Causa superior et inferior.

Chauliac was completely convinced. He sought to protect himself against it by the usual means;* and it was probably he who advised Pope Clement VI. to shut himself up while the plague lasted. The preservation of this pope's life, however, was most beneficial to the city of Avignon, for he loaded the poor with judicious acts of kindness,—took care to have proper attendants provided, and paid physicians himself to afford assistance wherever human aid could avail; an advantage which, perhaps, no other city enjoyed.† Nor was the treatment of

* Purging with aloëtic pills; bleeding; purification of the air by means of large fires; the use of treacle; frequent smelling to volatile substances, of which certain "poma," were prepared; the internal use of Armenian bole,—a plague-remedy derived from the Arabians, and, throughout the middle ages, much in vogue, and very improperly used; and the employment of acescent food, in order to resist putridity. *Guy de Chauliac* appears to have recommended flight to many. Loc. citat. p. 115. Compare *Chalin*, L. II. who gives most excellent precepts on this subject.

† *Auger. de Biterris.* Loc. cit.

plague patients in Avignon by any means objectionable; for, after the usual depletions by bleeding and aperients, where circumstances required them, they endeavoured to bring the buboes to suppuration; they made incisions into the inflammatory boils, or burned them with a red-hot iron, a practice which at all times proves salutary, and in the Black Plague saved many lives. In this city, the Jews, who lived in a state of the greatest filth, were most severely visited, as also the Spaniards, whom Chalin accuses of great intemperance.*

Still more distinct notions on the causes of the plague were stated to his contemporaries in the 14th century, by Galeazzo di Santa Sofia, a learned man, a native of Padua, who likewise treated plague-patients at Vienna,† though in what year is undetermined. He distinguishes carefully *pestilence* from *epidemie* and *endemie*. The common notion of the

* L. I. c. 4. p. 39. † Fol. 32. a. a. O.

two first accords exactly with that of an epidemic constitution, for both consist, according to him, in an unknown change or corruption of the air; with this difference, that *pestilence* calls forth diseases of different kinds; *epidemie*, on the contrary, always the same disease. As an example of an *epidemie*, he adduces a cough (influenza) which was observed in all climates at the same time, without perceptible cause; but he recognized the approach of a *pestilence*, independently of unusual natural phenomena, by the more frequent occurrence of various kinds of fever, to which the modern physicians would assign a nervous and putrid character. The *endemie* originates, according to him, only in local telluric changes—in deleterious influences which develope themselves in the earth and in the water, without a corruption of the air. These notions were variously jumbled together in his time, like everything which human understanding separates by too fine a line

of limitation. The estimation of cosmical influences, however, in the *epidemie* and *pestilence*, is well worthy of commendation; and Santa Sofia, in this respect, not only agrees with the most intelligent persons of the 14th and 15th centuries, but he has also promulgated an opinion which must, even now, serve as a foundation for our scarcely commenced investigations into cosmical influences.* *Pestilence* and *epidemie*, consist, not in alterations of the four primary qualities,† but in a corruption of the air, powerful, though quite immaterial, and not cognoscible by the senses: (corruptio aëris non substantialis, sed qualitativa) in a disproportion of the imponderables in the atmosphere, as it would be expressed by the moderns.‡

* *Galeacii de Sancta Sophia*, Liber de Febribus. Venet. 1514, fol. (Printed together with *Guilelmus Brixiensis, Marsilius de Sancta Sophia, Ricardus Parisiensis.* fol. 29. seq.)

† Warmth, cold, dryness and moisture.

‡ The talented *Chalin* entertains the same convic-

The causes of the *pestilence* and *epidemie* are, first of all, astral influences, especially on occasion of planetary conjunctions; then extensive putrefaction of animal and vegetable bodies, and terrestrial corruptions (corruptio in terra); to which also, bad diet and want may contribute. Santa Sofia considers the putrefaction of locusts, that had perished in the sea, and were again thrown up, combined with astral and terrestrial influences, as the cause of the pestilence in the eventful year of the "Great Mortality."

All the fevers which were called forth by the *pestilence*, are, according to him, of the putrid kind; for they originate prin-

tion, "Obscurum interdum esse vitium aëris, sub pestis initia et menses primos, hoc est argumento: *quod cum nec odore tetro gravis, nec turpi colore fœdatus fuerit, sed purus, tenuis, frigidus, qualis in montosis et asperis locis esse solet, et tranquillus, vehementissima sit tamen pestilentia infestaque*, etc." p. 28. The most recent observers of malaria have stated nothing more than this.

cipally from putridity of the heart's blood; which inevitably follows the inhalation of infected air. The Oriental Plague is, sometimes, but by no means always, occasioned by *pestilence* (?), which imparts to it a character (qualitas occulta) hostile to human nature. It originates frequently from other causes, among which, this physician was aware that contagion was to be reckoned; and it deserves to be remarked, that he held epidemic small-pox and measles to be infallible forerunners of the plague, as do the physicians and people of the East* at the present day.

In the exposition of his therapeutical views of the plague, a clearness of intellect is again shewn by Santa Sofia, which reflects credit on the age. It seemed to him to depend, 1st, on an evacuation of putrid matters, by purgatives and bleeding: yet he did not sanction the employment of these means indiscriminately,

* Compare *Enr. di Wolmar*, Abhandlung über die Pest. Berlin, 1827. 8vo.

and without consideration; least of all where the condition of the blood was healthy. He also declared himself decidedly against bleeding ad deliquium (venæ sectio eradicativa). 2d, Strengthening of the heart and prevention of putrescence. 3d, Appropriate regimen. 4th, Improvement of the air. 5th, Appropriate treatment of tumid glands and inflammatory boils, with emollient, or even stimulating poultices (mustard, lily-bulbs), as well as with red-hot gold and iron. Lastly, 6th, Attention to prominent symptoms. The stores of the Arabian pharmacy, which he brought into action to meet all these indications, were indeed very considerable; it is to be observed, however, that, for the most part, gentle means were accumulated, which in case of abuse, would do no harm; for the character of the Arabian system of medicine, whose principles were everywhere followed at this time, was mildness and caution. On this account too, we cannot believe

that a very prolix treatise by Marsigli di Santa Sofia,* a contemporary relative of Galeazzo, on the prevention and treatment of plague, can have caused much harm, although, perhaps, even in the 14th century, an agreeable latitude and confident assertions respecting things which no mortal has investigated, or which it is quite a matter of indifference to distinguish, were considered as proofs of a valuable practical talent.

The agreement of contemporary and later writers, shews that the published views of the most celebrated physicians of the 14th century, were those generally adopted. Among these, Chalin de Vinario is the most experienced. Though devoted to astrology, still more than his distinguished contemporary, he acknowledges the great power of terrestrial influences, and expresses himself very sensibly on the indisputable doctrine of contagion, endeavouring

* Tractatus de Febribus, fol. 48.

thereby to apologize for many surgeons and physicians of his time, who neglected their duty.* He asserted boldly, and with truth, "*that all epidemic diseases might become contagious,*† *and all fevers*

* De Peste Liber, pura latinitate donatus a *Jacobo Dalechampio*, Lugdun. 1552. 16. p. 40. 188. "Longe tamen plurimi congressu eorum qui fuerunt in locis pestilentibus periclitantur et gravissime, quoniam e causa duplici, nempe et aëris vitio, et eorum qui versantur nobiscum, vitio. *Hoc itaque modo fit, ut unius accessu in totam modo familiam, modo civitatem, modo villam, pestis invehatur.*" Compare p. 20, "Solæ privatorum aedes pestem sentiunt, *si adeat qui in pestilenti loco versatus est.*"—"Nobis proximi ipsi sumus, nemoque est tanta occœcatus amentia, qui de sua salute potius quam aliorum sollicitus non sit, maxime in contagione tam cita et rapida." Rather a loose principle, which might greatly encourage low sentiments, and much endanger the honor of the medical profession, but which, in *Chalin*, who was aware of the impossibility of avoiding contagion in uncleanly dwellings, is so far excusable, that he did not apply it to himself.

† Morbos omnes pestilentes contagiosos, audacter ego equidem pronuntio et assevero, p. 149.

epidemic," which attentive observers of all subsequent ages have confirmed.

He delivered his sentiments on blood-letting with sagacity, as an experienced physician; yet he was unable, as may be imagined, to moderate the desire for bleeding shewn by the ignorant monks. He was averse to draw blood from the veins of patients under fourteen years of age; but counteracted inflammatory excitement in them by cupping; and endeavoured to moderate the inflammation of the tumid glands by leeches.* Most of those who were bled, died; he therefore reserved this remedy for the plethoric; especially for the papal courtiers, and the hypocritical priests, whom he saw gratifying their sensual desires, and imitating Epicurus, whilst they pompously pretended to follow Christ.† He recom-

* Vide preceding note, p. 162. 163.

† Ibid. p. 97. 166. "Qualis (vita) esse solet eorum, qui sacerdotiorum et cultus divini prætextu, genio plus satis indulgent et obsequuntur, ac Christum

mended burning the boils with a red-hot iron, only in the plague without fever, which occurred in single cases;* and was always ready to correct those over-hasty surgeons, who, with fire and violent remedies, did irremediable injury to their patients.† Michael Savonarola, professor in Ferrara (1462), reasoning on the susceptibility of the human frame to the influence of pestilential infection, as the cause of such various modifications of disease, expresses himself as a modern physician would on this point; and an adoption of the principle of contagion, was the foundation of his definition of the plague.‡ No less worthy of observation are the views of the celebrated Valescus of Taranta, who, during the final visitation of the

speciosis titulis ementientes, Epicurum imitantur." Certainly a remarkable freedom of sentiment for the 14th century.

* Ibid. p. 183. 151. † Ibid. p. 159. 189.

‡ Canonica de Febribus, ad Raynerium Siculum, 1487, s. l., cap. 10, sine pag. "Febris pestilentialis est febris contagiosa ex ebullitione putrefactiva in altero quatuor humorum cordi propinquorum principaliter."

Black Death, in 1382, practised as a physician at Montpellier, and handed down to posterity what has been repeated in innumerable treatises on plague, which were written during the 15th and 16th centuries.*

Of all these notions and views regarding the plague, whose development we have represented, there are two especially, which are prominent in historical importance:—1st, The opinion of learned physicians, that the *pestilence*, or epidemic constitution, is the *parent of various kinds of disease;* that the plague sometimes, indeed, but by no means always, originates from it: that, to speak in the language of the moderns, *the pestilence* bears the same relation to contagion, that a predisposing cause does to an occasional cause: and 2dly, the universal conviction of the contagious power of that disease.

* *Valesci de Tharanta*, Philonium. Lugdani, 1535. 8. L. VII., c. 18., fol. 401., b. seq.—Compare *Astruc*, Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Faculté de Médicine de Montpellier, Paris, 1767. 4. p. 208.

Contagion gradually attracted more notice: it was thought that in it, the most powerful occasional cause might be avoided; the possibility of protecting whole cities by separation, became gradually more evident; and so horrifying was the recollection of the eventful year of the "*Great Mortality*," that before the close of the 14th century, ere the ill effects of the Black Plague had ceased, nations endeavoured to guard against the return of this enemy, by an earnest and effectual defence.

The first regulation which was issued for this purpose, originated with Viscount Bernabo, and is dated the 17th Jan. 1374. "Every plague patient was to be taken out of the city into the fields, there to die or to recover. Those who attended upon a plague patient, were to remain apart for ten days, before they again associated with any body. The priests were to examine the diseased, and point out to special commissioners, the persons

infected; under punishment of the confiscation of their goods, and of being burned alive. Whoever imported the plague, the state condemned his goods to confiscation. Finally, none except those who were appointed for that purpose, were to attend plague-patients, under penalty of death and confiscation.*

These orders, in correspondence with the spirit of the 14th century, are sufficiently decided to indicate a recollection of the good effects of confinement, and of keeping at a distance those suspected of having plague. It was said that Milan itself, by a rigorous barricado of three houses in which the plague had broken out, maintained itself free from the "*Great Mortality*," for a considerable time;† and examples of the preser-

* Chronicon Regiense, *Muratori*, Tom. XVIII. p. 82.

† *Adr. Chenot*, Hinterlassene Abhandlungen über die ärztlichen und politischen Anstalten bei der Pestseuche, Wien, 1798, 8vo. p. 146. From this period it was common in the middle ages to barricade the

vation of individual families, by means of a strict separation, were certainly very frequent. That these orders must have caused universal affliction from their uncommon severity, as we know to have been especially the case in the city of Reggio, may be easily conceived; but Bernabo did not suffer himself to be frightened from his purpose—on the contrary, when the plague returned in the year 1383, he forbad the admission of people from infected places into his territories, on pain of death.* We have now, it is true, no account how far he succeeded; yet it is to be supposed that he arrested the disease, for it had long lost the property of the Black Death, to spread abroad in the air the contagious matter which proceeded from the lungs, charged with putridity, and to taint the atmosphere of whole cities by the vast

doors and windows of houses infected with plague, and to suffer the inhabitants to perish without mercy.—*S. Möhsen*, Loc. cit.

* Chron. Reg. Loc. cit.

numbers of the sick. Now that it had resumed its milder form, so that it infected only by contact, it admitted being confined within individual dwellings, as easily as in modern times.

Bernabo's example was imitated; nor was there any century more appropriate for recommending to governments strong regulations against the plague, than the 14th; for when it broke out in Italy, in the year 1399, and still demanded new victims, it was for the 16th time; without reckoning frequent visitations of measles and small-pox. In this same year, Viscount John, in milder terms than his predecessor, ordered that no stranger should be admitted from infected places, and that the city gates should be strictly guarded. Infected houses were to be ventilated for at least eight or ten days, and purified from noxious vapours by fires, and by fumigations with balsamic and aromatic substances. Straw, rags, and the like, were to be burned; and

the bedsteads which had been used, set out for four days in the rain or the sunshine, so that, by means of the one or the other, the morbific vapour might be destroyed. No one was to venture to make use of clothes or beds out of infected dwellings, unless they had been previously washed and dried either at the fire or in the sun. People were, likewise, to avoid, as long as possible, occupying houses which had been frequented by plague-patients.*

We cannot precisely perceive in these an advance towards general regulations; and perhaps people were convinced of the insurmountable impediments which opposed the separation of open inland countries, where bodies of people connected together could not be brought, even by the most obdurate severity, to renounce the habit of a profitable intercourse.

Doubtless it is Nature which has done the most to banish the Oriental plague from

* *Muratori*, Tom. XVI., p. 560.—Compare *Chenot*, loc. cit. p. 146.

western Europe, where the increasing cultivation of the earth, and the advancing order in civilized society, prevented it from remaining domesticated; which it most probably had been in the more ancient times.

In the fifteenth century, during which it broke out seventeen times in different places in Europe*, it was of the more consequence to oppose a barrier to its entrance from Asia, Africa, and Greece (which had become Turkish); for it would have been difficult for it to maintain itself indigenously any longer. Among the southern commercial states, however, which were called on to make the greatest exertions to this end, it was principally Venice, formerly so severely attacked by the black plague, that put the necessary restraint upon the perilous profits of the merchant. Until towards the end of the fifteenth century, the very considerable intercourse with the East was free and unimpeded. Ships of commercial cities had often brought over the plague: nay,

* *Papon*, loc. cit.

the former irruption of the *great mortality* itself had been occasioned by navigators. For, as in the latter end of Autumn, 1347, four ships full of plague-patients returned from the Levant to Genoa, the disease spread itself there with astonishing rapidity. On this account, in the following year, the Genoese forbid the entrance of suspected ships into their port. These sailed to Pisa and other cities on the coast, where already Nature had made such mighty preparations for the reception of the Black Plague, and what we have already described took place in consequence.*

In the year 1485, when, among the cities of northern Italy, Milan especially felt the scourge of the plague, a special council of health, consisting of three nobles, was established at Venice, who probably tried every thing in their power to prevent the entrance of this disease, and gradually called into activity all those regulations

* *Chenot*, p. 145.

which have served in later times as a pattern for the other southern states of Europe. Their endeavours were, however, not crowned with complete success; on which account their powers were increased, in the year 1504, by granting them the right of life and death over those who violated the regulations.* Bills of health were probably first introduced in the year 1527, during a fatal plague† which visited Italy for five years (1525—30), and called forth redoubled caution.

The first lazarettos were established upon islands at some distance from the city, seemingly as early as the year 1485. Here all strangers coming from places where the existence of plague was suspected were detained. If it appeared in the city itself, the sick were despatched with their families to what was called the Old Lazaretto, were there furnished with provisions and

* *Le Bret*, Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig. Riga, 1775. 4, Part II., Div. 2, p. 752.

† *Zagata*, Cronica di Verona, 1744. 4, III., p. 93.

medicines, and, when they were cured, were detained, together with all those who had had intercourse with them, still forty days longer in the New Lazaretto, situated on another island. All these regulations were every year improved, and their needful rigour was increased, so that from the year 1585 onwards no appeal was allowed from the sentence of the Council of Health; and the other commercial nations gradually came to the support of the Venetians, by adopting corresponding regulations.* Bills of health, however, were not general until the year 1665.†

The appointment of a forty days' detention, whence quarantines derive their name, was not dictated by caprice, but probably had a medical origin, which is derivable in part from the doctrine of critical days; for the fortieth day, according to the most an-

* *Le Bret*, loc. cit. Compare Hamburger Remarquen of the year 1700, p. 282 and 305.

† Göttinger gelehrte Anzeigen, 1772, p. 22.

cient notions, has been always regarded as the last of ardent diseases, and the limit of separation between these and those which are chronic. It was the custom to subject lying-in women for forty days to a more exact superintendance. There was a good deal also said in medical works of forty day epochs in the formation of the fœtus, not to mention that the alchymists expected more durable revolutions in forty days, which period they called the philosophical month.

This period being generally held to prevail in natural processes, it appeared reasonable to assume and legally to establish it as that required for the development of latent principles of contagion, since public regulations cannot dispense with decisions of this kind, even though they should not be wholly justified by the nature of the case. Great stress has likewise been laid on theological and legal grounds which were certainly of greater

weight in the fifteenth century than in more modern times.*

On this matter, however, we cannot decide, since our only object here is to point out the origin of a political means of protection against a disease, which has been the greatest impediment to civilization within the memory of man; a means, that, like Jenner's vaccine after the small-pox had ravaged Europe for twelve hundred years, has diminished the check which mortality puts on the progress of civilization, and thus given to the life and manners of the nations of this part of the world a new direction, the result of which we cannot foretel.

* The forty days' duration of the Flood, the forty days' sojourn of Moses on Mount Sinai, our Saviour's fast for the same length of time in the wilderness; lastly, what is called the Saxon term (Sächsische Frist,) which lasts for forty days, &c. Compare *G. W. Wedel.* Centuria Exercitationum Medico-philologicarum. *De Quadragesima Medica.* Jenae, 1701. 4, Dec. IV., p. 16.

APPENDIX.

I.

Das alte Geisslerlied

NACH MASSMANN'S AUSGABE VON HERRN PROFESSOR LACHMANN MIT DER HANDSCHRIFT VERGLICHEN.

Sve siner sele wille pleghen
De sal gelden unde weder geuen
So wert siner sele raed
Des help uns leue herre goed
Nu tredet here we botsen wille
Vle wi io de hetsen helle
Lucifer is en bose geselle
Sven her hauet
Mit peke he en lauet
Datz vle wi ef wir hauen sin
Des help uns maria koninghin
Das wir dines kindes hulde win
Jesus crist de wart ge vanghen
An en cruce wart he ge hanghen
Dat cruce wart des blodes rod
Wer klaghen sin marter unde sin dod
Sunder war mide wilt tu mi lonen
Dre negele unde en dornet crone
Das cruce vrone en sper en stich
Sunder datz leyd ich dor dich
Was wltu nu liden dor mich

The Ancient Song of the Flagellants

ACCORDING TO MASSMANN'S EDITION COMPARED WITH THE MS.
BY PROFESSOR LACHMANN.

(Translation).

WHOE'ER to save his soul is fain,
Must pay and render back again.
His safety so shall he consult:
Help us, good Lord, to this result.
Ye that repent your crimes, draw nigh.
From the burning hell we fly,
From Satan's wicked company.
Whom he leads
With pitch he feeds.
If we be wise we this shall flee.
Maria! Queen! we trust in thee,
To move thy Son to sympathy.
Jesus Christ was captive led,
And to the cross was riveted.
The cross was reddened with his gore
And we his martyrdom deplore.
" Sinner, canst thou to me atone,
" Three pointed nails, a thorny crown,
" The holy cross, a spear, a wound,
" These are the cruel pangs I found.
" What wilt thou, sinner, bear for me?"

So rope wir herre mit luden done
Unsen denst den nem to lone
Be hode uns vor der helle nod
Des bidde wi dich dor dinen dod
Dor god vor gete wi unse blot
Dat is uns tho den suden guot
Maria muoter koninginghe
Dor dines leuen kindes minne
Al unse nod si dir ghe klaghet
Des help uns moter maghet reyne.
De erde beuet och kleuen de steyne
Lebe hertze du salt weyne
Wir wenen trene mit den oghen
Unde hebben des so guden louen
Mit unsen sinnen unde mit hertzen
Dor uns leyd crist vil manighen smertzen
Nu slaed w sere
Dor cristus ere.
Dor god nu latet de sunde mere
Dor god nu latet de sunde varen
Se wil sich god ouer uns en barmen
Maria stund in grotzen noden
Do se ire leue kint sa doden
En svert dor ire sele snet
Sunder dat la di wesen led
In korter vrist
God tornich ist

Lord, with loud voice we answer thee,
Accept our service in return,
And save us lest in hell we burn.
We, through thy death, to thee have sued.
For God in heaven we shed our blood:
This for our sins will work to good.
Blessed Maria! Mother! Queen!
Through thy loved Son's redeeming mean
Be all our wants to thee pourtrayed.
Aid us, Mother! spotless Maid!
Trembles the earth, the rocks are rent,*
Fond heart of mine, thou must relent.
Tears from our sorrowing eyes we weep;
Therefore so firm our faith we keep
With all our hearts—with all our senses.
Christ bore his pangs for our offences.
Ply well the scourge for Jesus' sake,
And God through Christ your sins shall take.
For love of God abandon sin,
To mend your vicious lives begin,
So shall we his mercy win.
Direful was Maria's pain
When she beheld her dear One slain.
Pierced was her soul as with a dart:
Sinner, let this affect thy heart.
The time draws near
When God in anger shall appear.

* We hence perceive with what feelings subterraneous thunders were regarded by the people.

Jesus wart gelauet mid gallen
Des sole wi an en cruce vallen
Er heuet uch mit uwen armen
Dat sic god ouer uns en barme
Jesus dorch dine namen dry
Nu make uns hir van sunde vry
Jesus dor dine wnden rod
Be hod uns vor den gehen dod
Dat he sende sinen geist
Und uns dat kortelike leist
De vrowe unde man ir e tobreken
Dat wil god selven an en wreken
Sveuel pik und och de galle
Dat gutet de duuel in se alle
Vor war sint se des duuels spot
Dor vor behode uns herre god
De e de ist en reyne leuen
De had uns god selven gheuen
Ich rade uch vrowen unde mannen
Dor god gy solen houard annen
Des biddet uch de arme sele
Dorch god nu latet houard mere
Dor god nu latet houard varen
So wil sich god ouer uns en barmen
Cristus rep in hemelrike
Sinen engelen al gelike
De cristenheit wil mi ent wichen
Des wil lan och se vor gaen

Jesus was refreshed with gall:
Prostrate crosswise let us fall,
Then with uplifted arms arise,
That God with us may sympathise.
Jesus, by thy titles three,*
From our bondage set us free.
Jesus, by thy precious blood,
Save us from the fiery flood.
Lord, our helplessness defend,
And to our aid thy spirit send.
If man and wife their vows should break
God will on such his vengeance wreak.
Brimstone and pitch, and mingled gall,
Satan pours on such sinners all.
Truly, the devil's scorn are they:
Therefore, O Lord, thine aid we pray.
Wedlock 's an honorable tie
Which God himself doth sanctify.
By this warning, man, abide,
God shall surely punish pride.
Let your precious soul entreat you,
Lay down pride lest vengeance meet you.
I do beseech ye, pride forsake,
So God on us shall pity take.
Christ in heaven, where he commands,
Thus addressed his angel bands:—
"Christendom dishonors me,
"Therefore her ruin I decree."

* For the sake of thy Trinity.

Maria bat ire kint so sere
Leue kint la se di boten
Dat wil ich sceppen dat se moten
Bekeren sich.
Des bidde ich dich
Gi logenere
Gy meynen ed sverer
Gi bichten reyne und lan de sunde uch ruwen
So wil sich god in uch vor nuwen
Owe du arme wokerere
Du bringest en lod up en punt
Dat senket din an der helle grunt
Ir morder und ir straten rouere
Ir sint dem leuen gode un mere
Ir ne wilt uch ouer nemende barmen
Des sin gy eweliken vor loren
Were dusse bote nicht ge worden
De cristenheit wer gar vorsunden
De leyde duuel had se ge bunden
Maria had lost unsen bant
Sunder ich saghe di leue mere
Sunte peter is portenere
Wende dich an en he letset dich in
He bringhet dich vor de koninghin
Leue herre sunte Michahel
Du bist en plegher aller sel
Be hode uns vor der helle nod
Dat do dor dines sceppers dod

Then Mary thus implored her son :—
" Penance to thee, loved Child, be done;
" That she repent be mine the care;
Stay then thy wrath, and hear my prayer.
Ye liars!
Ye that break your sacrament,
Shrive ye throughly and repent.
Your heinous sins sincerely rue,
So shall the Lord your hearts renew.
Woe! usurer, though thy wealth abound,
For every ounce thou mak'st a pound
Shall sink thee to the hell profound.
Ye murd'rers, and ye robbers all,
The wrath of God on you shall fall.
Mercy ye ne'er to others shew,
None shall ye find; but endless woe.
Had it not been for our contrition,
All Christendom had met perdition.
Satan had bound her in his chain;
Mary hath loosed her bonds again.
Glad news I bring thee, sinful mortal,
In heaven Saint Peter keeps the portal,
Apply to him with suppliant mien,
He bringeth thee before thy Queen.
Benignant Michael, blessed saint,
Guardian of souls, receive our plaint.
Through thy Almighty Maker's death,
Preserve us from the hell beneath.

II.

Examination of the Jews accused of poisoning the Wells.*

Answer from the Castellan of Chillon to the City of Strasburg, together with a Copy of the Inquisition and Confession of several Jews confined in the Castle of Chillon on suspicion of poison. Anno 1348.

To the Honorable the Mayor, Senate and Citizens of the City of Strasburg, the Castellan of Chillon, Deputy of the Bailiff of Chablais, sendeth greeting with all due submission and respect.

Understanding that you desire to be made acquainted with the confession of the Jews, and the proofs brought forward against them, I certify, by these presents, to you, and each of you that desires to be in-

* An appearance of justice having been given to all later persecutions by these proceedings, they deserve to be recorded as important historical documents. The original is in Latin, but we have preferred the German translation in Königshoven's Chronicle, p. 1029.

formed, that they of Berne have had a copy of the inquisition and confession of the Jews who lately resided in the places specified, and who were accused of putting poison into the wells and several other places: as also the most conclusive evidence of the truth of the charge preferred against them. Many Jews were put to the question, others being excused from it, because they confessed, and were brought to trial and burnt. Several Christians, also, who had poison given them by the Jews for the purpose of destroying the Christians, were put on the wheel and tortured. This burning of the Jews and torturing of the said Christians took place in many parts of the county of Savoy.

Fare you well."

The Confession made on the 15th day of September, in the year of our Lord 1348, *in the Castle of Chillon, by the Jews arrested in Neustadt, on the Charge of Poisoning the Wells, Springs and other places; also Food &c., with the Design of destroying and extirpating all Christians.*

I. Balavignus, a Jewish physician, inhabitant of Thonon, was arrested at Chillon in consequence of being found in the neighbourhood. He was put for a short time to the rack, and, on being taken down, confessed, after much hesitation, that, about ten weeks before, the Rabbi Jacob of Toledo, who because of a cita-

tion, had resided at Chamberi since Easter, sent him, by a Jewish boy, some poison in the mummy of an egg: it was a powder sewed up in a thin leathern pouch accompanied by a letter, commanding him, on penalty of excommunication, and by his required obedience to the law, to throw this poison into the larger and more frequented wells of the town of Thonon, to poison those who drew water there. He was further enjoined not to communicate the circumstance to any person whatever, under the same penalty. In conformity with this command of the Jewish rabbis and doctors of the law, he, Balavignus, distributed the poison in several places, and acknowledged having one evening placed a certain portion under a stone in a spring on the shore at Thonon. He further confessed that the said boy brought various letters of a similar import, addressed to others of his nation, and particularly specified some directed severally to Mossoiet, Banditon, and Samoleto of Neustadt; to Musseo Abramo and Aquetus of Montreantz, Jews residing at Thurn in Vivey; to Benetonus and his son at St. Moritz; to Vivianus Jacobus, Aquetus and Sonetus, Jews at Aquani. Several letters of a like nature were sent to Abram and Musset, Jews at Moncheoli; and the boy told him that he had taken many others to different and distant places, but he did not recollect to whom they were addressed. Balavignus further confessed that, after having put the poison into the spring at Thonon, he had positively forbidden his wife and children to drink the water, but

had not thought fit to assign a reason. He avowed the truth of this statement, and, in the presence of several credible witnesses, swore by his Law, and the Five Books of Moses to every item of his deposition.

On the day following, Balavignus, voluntarily and without torture, ratified the above confession verbatim before many persons of character, and, of his own accord, acknowledged that, on returning one day from Tour near Vivey, he had thrown into a well below Mustruez, namely that of La Conerayde, a quantity of the poison tied up in a rag, given to him for the purpose by Aquetus of Montreantz, an inhabitant of the said Tour: that he had acquainted Manssiono, and his son Delosaz, residents of Neustadt, with the circumstance of his having done so, and advertised them not to drink of the water. He described the colour of the poison as being red and black.

On the nineteenth day of September, the above-named Balavignus confessed, without torture, that about three weeks after Whitsuntide, a Jew named Mussus told him that he had thrown poison into the well in the custom-house of that place, the property of the Borneller family; and that he no longer drank the water of this well, but that of the lake. He further deposed that Mussus informed him that he had also laid some of the poison under the stones in the custom-house at Chillon. Search was accordingly made in this well, and the poison found: some of it was given to a Jew by way of trial, and he died in con-

sequence. He also stated that the rabbis had ordered him and other Jews to refrain from drinking of the water for nine days after the poison was infused into it; and, immediately on having poisoned the waters, he communicated the circumstance to the other Jews. He, Balavignus, confessed that about two months previously, being at Evian, he had some conversation on the subject with a Jew called Jacob, and, among other things, asked him whether he also had received writings and poison, and was answered in the affirmative; he then questioned him whether he had obeyed the command, and Jacob replied that he had not, but had given the poison to Savetus, a Jew, who had thrown it into the Well de Morer at Evian. Jacob also desired him, Balavignus, to execute the command imposed on him with due caution. He confessed that Aquetus of Montreantz had informed him that he had thrown some of the poison into the well above Tour, the water of which he sometimes drank. He confessed that Samolet had told him that he had laid the poison which he had received in a well, which, however, he refused to name to him. Balavignus, as a physician, further deposed that a person infected by such poison coming in contact with another while in a state of perspiration, infection would be the almost inevitable result; as might also happen from the breath of an infected person. This fact he believed to be correct, and was confirmed in his opinion by the attestation of many experienced physicians. He also declared that none of his

community could exculpate themselves from this accusation, as the plot was communicated to all; and that all were guilty of the above charges. Balavignus was conveyed over the lake from Chillon to Clarens, to point out the well into which he confessed having thrown the powder. On landing, he was conducted to the spot; and, having seen the well, acknowledged that to be the place, saying, "This is the well into which I put the poison." The well was examined in his presence, and the linen cloth in which the poison had been wrapped was found in the waste-pipe by a notary-public named Heinrich Gerhard, in the presence of many persons, and was shewn to the said Jew. He acknowledged this to be the linen which had contained the poison, which he described as being of two colours, red and black, but said that he had thrown it into the open well. The linen cloth was taken away and is preserved.

Balavignus, in conclusion, attests the truth of all and every thing as above related. He believes this poison to contain a portion of the basilisk, because he had heard, and felt assured, that the above poison could not be prepared without it.

II. Banditono, a Jew of Neustadt, was, on the fifteenth day of September, subjected for a short time to the torture. After a long interval, he confessed having cast a quantity of poison, about the size of a large nut, given him by Musseus, a Jew, at Tour near Vivey, into the well of Carutet, in order to poison those who drank of it.

The following day, Banditono, voluntarily and without torture, attested the truth of the aforesaid deposition; and also confessed that the Rabbi Jacob von Pasche, who came from Toledo and had settled at Chamberi, sent him, at Pilliex, by a Jewish servant, some poison about the size of a large nut, together with a letter, directing him to throw the powder into the wells on pain of excommunication. He had therefore thrown the poison, which was sewn up in a leathern bag, into the well of Cercliti de Roch; further, also, that he saw many other letters in the hands of the servant addressed to different Jews; that he had also seen the said servant deliver one, on the outside of the upper gate, to Samuletus, the Jew, at Neustadt. He stated, also, that the Jew Massolet had informed him that he had put poison into the well near the bridge at Vivey.

III. The said Manssiono, Jew of Neustadt, was put upon the rack on the fifteenth day of the same month, but refused to admit the above charge, protesting his entire ignorance of the whole matter; but the day following, he, voluntarily and without any torture, confessed, in the presence of many persons, that he came from Mancheolo one day in last Whitsunweek, in company with a Jew named Provenzal, and, on reaching the well of Chabloz Crüez between Vyona and Mura, the latter said, "You must put some of the poison which I will give you into that well, or woe betide you!" He therefore took a portion of the powder about the big-

ness of a nut, and did as he was directed. He believed that the Jews in the neighbourhood of Evian had convened a council among themselves relative to this plot, before Whitsuntide. He further said that Balavignus had informed him of his having poisoned the Well de la Conerayde below Mustruez. He also affirmed his conviction of the culpability of the Jews in this affair, stating that they were fully acquainted with all the particulars, and guilty of the alleged crime.

On the third day of the October following, Manssiono was brought before the commissioners, and did not in the least vary from his former deposition, or deny having put the poison into the said wells.

The above-named Jews, prior to their execution, solemnly swore by their Law to the truth of their several depositions, and declared that all Jews whatsoever, from seven years old and upwards, could not be exempted from the charge of guilt, as all of them were acquainted with the plot, and more or less participators in the crime.

[*The seven other examinations scarcely differ from the above, except in the names of the accused, and afford but little variety. We will, therefore, only add a characteristic passage at the conclusion of this document. The whole speaks for itself.*]

There still remain numerous proofs and accusations against the above-mentioned Jews: also against Jews and Christians in different parts of the county of Savoy, who have already received the punishment due to their

heinous crime; which, however, I have not at hand, and cannot therefore send you. I must add that all the Jews of Neustadt were burnt according to the just sentence of the law. At Augst, I was present when three Christians were flayed on account of being accessory to the plot of poisoning. Very many Christians were arrested for this crime in various places in this country, especially at Evian, Gebenne, Krusilien and Hochstett, who, at last and in their dying moments, were brought to confess and acknowledge that they had received the poison from the Jews. Of these Christians some have been quartered; others flayed and afterwards hanged. Certain commissioners have been appointed by the magistrates to enforce judgment against all the Jews; and I believe that none will escape.

III.

Extracts from "A Boke or Counseill against the Disease commonly called the Sweate or Sweatyng Sickenesse," made by John Caius, Doctour in Phisicke.—Imprinted at London. A. D. 1552.

"Hetherto I haue shewed the beginning, name, nature & signes of this disease: now I will declare the causes, which be ii: infection, & impure spirites in bodies corrupt by repletion. Infection, by th'aire receiuing euel qualities, distempring not only ye hete, but the hole substance thereof, in putrifieng the same, & that generally ii waies. By the time of the yere vnnatural, and by the nature and site of the soile & region . whereunto maye be put the particular accidentes of this same. By the time of the yeare vnnaturall, as if winter be hot & drie, somer hot & moist (a fit time for sweates) the spring colde and drye, the fall hot & moist. To this mai be ioyned the euel disposition by constellation, whiche hath a great power & dominion in al erthly thinges. By the site & nature of the soile & region, many wayes. First and specially, by euel mistes & exhalations drawen out of the grounde by the sunne in the heate of the yeare, as chanced

among the Grekes in the siege of Troy, whereby died firste dogges & mules, after, men in great numbre: & here also in England in this M.D.L.I. yeare, the cause of this pestilent sweate, but of dyuers nature. Whiche miste in the countrie wher it began, was sene flie from toune to toune, with suche a stincke in morninges & euenings, that men could scarcely abide it. Then by dampes out of the earth, as out of Galenes Barathrum, or the poetes auernum, or aornum, the dampes wherof be such, that thei kil ye birdes flieng ouer them. Of like dampes, I heard in the north country in cole pits, wherby the laboring men be streight killed, except before the houre of coming therof (which thei know by ye flame of their candle) thei auoid the ground. Thirdly by putrefaction or rot in groundes aftre great flouddes, in carions & in dead men. After great fluddes, as happened in ye time of Gallien the Emperor at Rome, in Achaia & Libia, wher the seas sodeinly did ouerflow ye cities nigh to ye same. And in the XI yeare of Pelagius, when al the flouddes throughe al Italye didde rage, but chieflye Tibris at Rome, whiche in many places was as highe as the walles of the citie.

In carions or dead bodies, as fortuned here in Englande upon the sea banckes in the tyme of King Alured or Alfrede (as some Chroniclers write) but in the time of Ethelred after Sabellicus, by occasion of drowned Locustes cast up by the Sea, which by a wynde were driuen oute of Fraunce thether. This locust is a flie in bignes of a manne's thumbe, in colour broune, in shape

somewhat like a greshopper, hauing VI fiete, so many wynges, two tiethe, & an hedde like a horse, and therfore called in Italy Caualleto, where ouer ye citie of Padoa, in the yere M.D.XIII. (as I remembre,) I, with manye more did see a swarme of theim, whose passage ouer the citie, did laste two hours, in breadth inestimable to euery man there. Here by example to note infection by deadde menne in Warres . either in rotting aboue the ground, as chaunced in Athenes by theim of Ethiopia, or else in beyng buried ouerly as happened at Bulloigne, in the yere M.D.XIV. the yeare aftre King Henrye theight had conquered the same, or by long continuance of an hoste in one place, it is more playne by dayly experience, then it neadeth to be shewed.

Therefore I wil now go to the fourth especial cause of infection, the pent aier, breaking out of the ground in yearthquakes, as chaunced at Venice in the firste yeare of Andrea Dandulo, then Duke, the XXIV day of Januarye, and XX hour after their computacion. By which infection mani died, & many wer borne before their time. The V cause is close & unstirred aire & therfore putrified or currupt, out of old welles, holes in ye ground made for grain, wherof many I did se in & about Pesaro in Italy, by opening them aftre a great space, as both those countrimen do confesse & also by example is declared, for y^t^ manye in opening them unwarely be killed. Out of caues and tombes also, as chaunced first in the country of Babilonia, proceding

aftre into Grece, and so to Rome, by occasion that ye souldiers of themperour Marcus Antoninus, upon hope of money, brake up a golden coffine of Auidius Cassius, spieng a little hole therin, in the temple of Apollo in Seleucia, as Ammianus Marcellinus writeth. To these mai be ioyned the particular causes of infection, which I cal the accidentes of the place, augmenting the same. As nigh to dwelling places, merishe & muddy groundes, puddles or donghilles, sinckes or canales, easing places or carions, deadde ditches or rotten groundes, close aier in houses or ualleis, with such like. Thus muche for the firste cause.

The second cause of this Englyshe Ephemera, I said were thimpure spirites in bodies corupt by repletion. Repletion I cal here, abundance of humores euel & maliciouse, from long time by little and little gathered by euel diete, remaining in the bodye, coming either by to moche meate, or by euel meate in qualitie, as infected frutes, meates of euel juse or nutriment: or both ioyntly. To such spirites when the aire infective cometh consonant, then be thei distempered, corrupted, sore handled, & oppressed, then nature is forced & the disease engendred. But while I doe declare these impure spirites to be one cause, I must remoue your myndes from spirites to humours, for that the spirites be fedde of the finest partes therof, & aftre bringe you againe to spirites where I toke you. And for so muche as I haue not yet forgotten to whome I write, in this declaration I will leaue apart al learned & subtil reasons, as here

void & vnmiete & only vse suche as be most euident to whom I write, & easiest to be understanden of the same: and at ones therwith shew also why it haunteth us Englishmen more then other nations. Therfore I passe ouer the vngentle sauoure or smell of the sweate, grosenes, colour, and other qualities of the same, the quantitie, the daunger in stopping, the maner in coming furthe redily, or hardly, hot or cold, the notes in the excrementes, the state longer or sorer, with suche others, which mai be tokens of corrupt humours & spirites, & onli wil stand vpon III reasons declaring ye same swet by gret repletion to be in vs not otherwise for al ye euel aire apt to this disease, more then other nations. For as heraftre I wil shew, & Galen confirmeth, our bodies cannot suffre any thing or hurt by corrupt & infectiue causes, except ther be in them a certein mater prepared apt & like to receiue it, els if one were sick, al shuld be sick, if in this countri, in al countries wher the infection came, which thing we se doth not chance. For touching the first reason, we se this sweting sicknes or pestilent Ephemera to be oft in England, but neuer entreth Scotland, (except the borders) albeit thei both be joinctly within the compas of on sea. The same beginning here, hath assailed Brabant & the costes nigh to it, but neuer passed Germany, where ones it was in like facion as here, with great mortalitie, in the yere M.D.XXIX. Cause wherof none other there is naturall, then the euell diet of these thre countryes whiche destroy more meates and drynckes withoute al ordre, conueni-

ent time, reason, or necessitie, then either Scotlande, or all other countries vnder the sunne, to the greate annoiance of their owne bodies and wittes, hinderance of theim which haue nede, and great dearth and scarcitie in their common welthes. Wherfore if Esculapius the inuentour of Phisike, ye sauer of men from death, & restorer to life, should returne again into this world, he could not saue these sortes of men, hauing so moche sweatyng stuffe, so many euill humoures laid by in store, from this displeasante, feareful, & pestilent disease: except thei would learne a new lession, & folowe a new trade. For otherwise, neither the auoidyng of this countrie (the seconde reason) nor fleying into others, (a commune refuge in other diseases) wyll preserue us Englishe men, as in this laste sweate is by experience well proued in Cales, Antwerpe, and other places of Brabant, wher only our contrimen ware sicke and none others, except one or ii. others of thenglishe diete, which is also to be noted. (Fol. 13 to 17.)

* * * *

The thirde and laste reason is, y^t^ they which had thys sweat sore with perille or death, were either men of welthe, ease & welfare, or of the poorer sorte such as wer idle persones, good ale drinkers, and Tavernhaunters. For these, by ye great welfare of the one sorte, and large drinkyng of thother, heped up in their bodies moche euill matter: by their ease and idlenes, coulde not waste and consume it. A confirmacion of this is, that the laborouse and thinne dieted

people, either had it not, because they dyd eate but litle to make the matter: or with no greate grefe and danger, because they laboured out moche therof. Wherefore upon small cause, necessarily must folowe a small effecte. All these reasones go to this ende, that persones of all countries of moderate and good diete, escape thys Englishe Ephemera, and those be onely vexed therewith, whiche be of immoderate and euill diete. But why? for the euill humores and corrupte aier alone? No. for then the pestilence and not the swet should rise. For what then? for ye impure spirites corrupte in theimselues and by the infectiue aier. Why so? for that of impure and corrupte humores, whether thei be blode or others, can rise none other then impure spirites. For euery thynge is such as that wherof it commeth. Now, that of the beste and fineste of the blode, yea in corrupte bodies (whyche beste is nought) these spirites be ingendred and fedde I before expressed. Therfor who wyl haue them pure and cleane, and himselfe free from sweat, muste kepe a pure and cleane diete, and then he shall be sure. (Fol. 20 to 21.)

* * * *

Who that lustethe to lyue in quiete suretie, out of the sodaine danger of this Englishe Ephemera, he aboue all thynges, of litle and good muste eate & spare not. the last parte wherof wyl please well (I doubt not) us Englishe men: the firste I thinke neuer a deale. Yet it must please theim that intende to lyue without the

reche of this disease. So doyng they shall easely escape it. For of that is good, can be engendred no euill: of that is litle, can be gathered no great store. Therfore helthful must he nedes be and free from this disease, that vsethe this kinde of liuynge and maner in dietynge. An example hereof may the wise man Socrates be, which by this sorte of diete escaped a sore pestilence in Athenes, neuer fleynge ne kepyng close him selfe from the same. Truly who will lyue accordynge to nature and not to lust, may with this diete be well contented. For nature is pleased with a litle, nor seketh other then that the mind voide of cares and feares may be in quiete merily, and the body voide of grefe, maye be in life swetly, as Lucretius writeth. Here at large to ronne out vntill my breth wer spent, as vpon a common place, against ye intemperance or excessive diete of Englande, thincommodities & displeasures of the same many waies: and contrarie, in commendation of meane diete and temperance (called of Plato sophrosyne, for that it conserueth wisdome) and the thousande commodities thereof, both for helthe, welthe, witte and longe life, well I might, & lose my laboure: such be our Englishe facions rather then reasones. But for that I purpose neither to wright a longe worke but a shorte counseill, nor to wery the reders with that they luste not to here, I will lette that passe, and moue them that desire further to knowe my mynde therin, to remember that I sayd before, of litle & good eate and spare not, wherby they shall easely

perceiue my meanyng. I therefore go furth with my diete, wherin my counseill is, that the meates be helthfull, and holsomly kylled, swetly saued, and wel prepared in rostyng, sethyng, baking, & so furth. The bread of swet corne, wel leuened, & so baked. The drinke of swete malte and good water kyndly brued, without other drosse now a daies used. No wine in all the tyme of sweatyng, excepte to suche whose sicknese require it for medicin, for fere of inflamynge & openynge, nor except ye halfe be wel soden water. In other tymes old, pure & smal. Wishing for the better execution hereof & ouersight of good and helthsome victalles, ther wer appointed certein masters of helth in euery citie and toune, as there is in Italie, whiche for the good order in all thynges, maye be in al places an example. The meates I would to be veale, muttone, kidde, olde lambe, chikyn, capone, henne, cocke, pertriche, phesane, felfare, smal birdes, pigeon, yong pecockes, whose fleshe by a certeine natural & secrete propertie neuer putrefie, as hath bene proued. Conies, porke of meane age, neither fatte nor leane, the skynne taken awaye, roste & eaten colde. Tartes of prunes, gelies of veale & capone. Yong befe in this case a little poudered is not to be dispraised, nor new egges & good milke. Butter in a mornyng with sage and rewe fastynge in the sweatynge time is a good preseruatiue, beside that it nourisheth. Crabbes, crauesses, picrel, perche ruffe, gogion, lampreis out of grauelly riuers, smeltes, dace, barbell, gornerd, whityng, soles,

flunders, plaice, millers thumbes, minues wᵗʰ such others, sodde in water & vinegre wᵗʰ rosemary, time, sage, & hole maces, & serued hote. Yea swete salte fishe & linge, for the saltes sake wastynge yᵉ humores therof, which in many freshe fishes remaine, maye be allowed well watered to them that haue non other & wel lyke it. Nor all fishes, no more then al fleshes be so euill as they be taken for: as is wel declared in physik, & approued by the olde and wise romaines moche in their fisshes, lusty chartusianes neuer in fleshes, & helthful poore people more in fishe than fleshe. But we are nowe a daies so vnwisely fine, and womanly delicate, that we may in no wise touch a fisshe. The olde manly hardnes, stoute courage, and peinfulnes of Englande is vtterly driuen awaye, in the stede wherof, men now a daies receiue womanlines & become nice, not able to withstande a blaste of wynde, or resiste a poore fisshe. And children be so brought up, that if they be not all daie by the fire with a toste and butire, and in their furres, they be streight sicke.

Sauces to metes I appoint firste aboue all thynges good appetite, and next Oliues, capers, juse of lemones, Barberies, Pomegranetes, Orenges and Sorel, veriuse & vineigre, iuse of unripe Grapes, thepes or Goseberies. After mete, quinces, or marmalade, Pomgranates, Orenges sliced eaten with Suger, Succate of the pilles or barkes therof, and of pomecitres, olde apples and peres, Brunes, Reisons Dates and Nuttes.

Figges also, so they be taken before diner, els no frutes of that yere, nor rawe herbes or rotes in sallattes, for that in suche times they be suspected to be partakers also of the enfected aire. (Fol. 21 to 24.)

* * * *

I remytte you to the discretion of a learned manne in phisike, who maye judge what is to be done, & how, according to the present estate of youre bodies, nature, custome, & proprety, age, strength, delyghte & qualitie, tyme of the yeare, with other circumstaunces, & thereafter to geue the quantitie, & make diuersitie of hys medicine. Otherwise loke not to receiue by this boke that good which I entend, but that euel which hy your owne foly you vndiscretelye bring. For good counseil may be abused. And for me to write of euery particular estate and case, whiche be so manye as there be menne, were so great almost a busines, as to numbre the sandes in the sea. Therefore seke you out a good Phisicien and knowen to haue skille, and at the leaste be so good to your bodies, as you are to your hosen or shoes, for the wel making or mending wherof, I doubte not but you wil diligently searche out who is knowen to be the best hosier or shoemaker in the place where you dwelle: and flie the vnlearned as a pestilence in a comune wealth. As simple women, carpenters, pewterers, brasiers, sopeballesellers, pulters, hostellers, painters, apotecaries (otherwise then for their drogges.) auaunters themselues to come from Pole, Constantinople, Italie,

Almaine, Spaine, Fraunce, Grece and Turkie, Jude, Egipt or Jury: from ye seruice of Emperoures, kinges & quienes, promising helpe of al diseases, yea vncurable, with one or twoo drinckes, by waters sixe monethes in continualle distillinge, by Aurum potabile, or quintessence, by drynckes of great and hygh prices, as though thei were made of the sunne, moone, or sterres, by blessynges and Blowinges, Hipocriticalle prayenges, and foolysh smokynges of shirtes Smockes and kerchieffes, wyth suche others theire phantasies, and mockeryes, meaninge nothinge els but to abuse your light belieue, and scorne you behind your backes with their medicines (so filthie, that I am ashamed to name them) for your single wit and simple belief, in trusting them most, whiche you know not at al, and understand least: like to them whiche thinke, farre foules haue faire fethers, althoughe thei be neuer so euel fauoured & foule: as thoughe there coulde not be so conning an Englishman, as a foolish running stranger, (of others I speake not) or so perfect helth by honest learning, as by deceiptfull ignorance. For in the erroure of these vnlearned reasteth the losse of youre honest estimation, diere bloudde, precious spirites, and swiete lyfe, the thyng of most estimation and price in this worlde, next vnto the immortal soule.

For consuming of euel matter within, and for making our bodies lustye, galiard, & helthful, I do not a litle commende exercise, whiche in vs Englishe men I allowe quick, and liuishe: as to runne after

houndes and haukes, to shote, wrastle, play at Tennes and weapons, tosse the winde balle, skirmishe at base (an exercise for a gentlemanne, muche vsed among the Italianes) and vaughting vpon an horse. Bowling, a good exercise for women: castinge of the barre and camping, I accompt rather a laming of legges, then an exercise. Yet I vtterly reproue theim not, if the hurt may be auoyded. For these a conueniente tyme is, before meate: due measure, reasonable sweatinge, in al times of the year, sauing in the sweatinge tyme. In the whiche I allow rather quietnesse then exercise, for opening the body, in suche persons specially as be liberally & freely brought up. Others, except sitting artificers, haue theire exercises by daily labours in their occupations, to whom nothing niedeth but solace onely, a thing conuenient for euery bodye that lusteth to live in helth. For els as non other thing, so not healthe canne be longe durable.

Thus I speake of solace, that I meane not Idlenesse, wisshing alwayes no man to be idle, but to be occupied in some honest kinde of thing necessary in a common welth. For I accompt them not worthie meate and drink in a commonwelth, y^{t} be not good for some purpose or seruice therin, but take them rather as burdennes vnprofitable and heauye to the yearth, men borne to fille a numbre only, and wast the frutes which therthe doeth geue, willing soner to fiede the Lacedemonians old & croked asse, whiche labored for the liuing so long as it coulde for age, then suche an idle

[illegible]

relieued. But to auoyde punishmente and to shew the waye to amendmente, I woulde again wishe, y^t^ for so much as we be so euel disposed of ourselfes to our own profites and comodities without help, this old law were renued, which forbiddeth the nedy & impotent parentes, to be releued of those their welthi chyldren, that by theym or theire meanes were not broughte vppe, eyther in good learning and Science, or honeste occupation. For so is a man withoute science, as a realme withoute a kyng. (Fol. 27 to 30.)

* * * *

Al these thinges duely obserued, and well executed, whiche before I haue for preseruation mencioned, if more ouer we can sette aparte al affections, as fretting cares and thoughtes, dolefull or sorowfull imaginations, vaine feares, folysh loues, gnawing hates, and geue oure selues to lyue quietly, frendlie & merily one with an outher, as men were wont to do in the old world, when this Countrie was called merye Englande, and euery man to medle in his own matters, thinking theim sufficient, as thei do in Italie, and auoyde malyce and dissencion, the destruction of commune wealthes, and priuate houses: I doubte not but we shall preserue our selues, both from this sweatinge syckenesse, and other diseases also not here purposed to be spoken of. (Fol. 31.)

FINIS.

Wertheimer, Printer, Leman-st. Goodman's-fields.

THE

EPIDEMICS

OF THE

MIDDLE AGES:

FROM THE GERMAN OF

I. F. C. HECKER, M.D.

PROFESSOR AT FREDERICK WILLIAM'S UNIVERSITY AT BERLIN,
AND MEMBER OF VARIOUS LEARNED SOCIETIES IN BERLIN, BONN,
COPENHAGEN, ERLANGEN, HANAU, LONDON, LYONS, METZ,
NAPLES, NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA, AND ZURICH.

TRANSLATED BY

B. G. BABINGTON, M.D. F.R.S.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

Dr. Hecker's account of the "Black Death," having, in its English translation, met with a favourable reception, I am led to believe that the "Dancing Mania," a similar production by the same able writer, will also prove acceptable. Should this be the case, it is my intention to complete the series by translating the history of the "Sweating Sickness," the only remaining epidemic considered by our author to belong to the Middle Ages.

The mind and the body reciprocally and mysteriously affect each other, and the

maladies which are the subject of these pages, are so intimately connected with the disordered state of both, that it is often difficult to determine on which they more essentially depend, or which they more seriously influence.

The physician will probably be led by their contemplation to admit that the imagination has a larger share in the production of disease than he might, without a knowledge of the striking facts here recorded, have supposed to be within the limits of possibility. He has, no doubt, already observed, that joy will affect the circulation, grief the digestion, that anger will heat the frame as perniciously as ardent spirits, and that fear will chill it as certainly as ice; but he may not have carried his observation to the extent of perceiving, that not only single and transient effects, but specific diseases are

produced through the agency of mental impressions, and he may therefore still be surprised to find that the dances of St. John and of St. Vitus, as they formerly spread by sympathy from city to city, gave rise to the same deviations from bodily health, in all the individuals whom they attacked; that Tarantism was the same disease, whether medically or morally considered, all over Italy; and that the "Lycanthropia" of the past, and the "Leaping Ague" of the present times, have each its respective train of peculiar symptoms.

The moralist will view these records of human frailty in a different light; he will examine the state of society which favoured the propagation of such maladies; he will enquire how far they have been the offspring of the ages in which they appeared, and although he may not be disposed to think with

our author, that they can never return, he will at least deduce from the facts here laid before him, that they originate in those minds, whether ignorant or ill educated, in which the imagination is permitted to usurp the power of sober sense, and the ideal is allowed to occupy the thoughts to the exclusion of the substantial.

That such minds are most frequently to be met with in an age of ignorance, we should naturally suppose, and we are borne out in that supposition by the fact, that these diseases have been declining in proportion to the advance of knowledge; but credulity and enthusiasm are not incompatible with a high degree of civilization: and if, among the educated classes, the female sex is more sentimental than the male, and the affluent are more credulous than those who are dependent on their own

exertions for their support, it is to be accounted for by the fact, that they usually devote more leisure to the pleasurable contemplation of works of imagination, and are less imperatively called on to improve their judgment by the dry study of facts, and the experience acquired in the serious business of life. But there is no class, even in this age of boasted reason, wholly exempt from the baneful influence of fanaticism; and instances are not wanting, in our own days, and in this very capital, to prove, that disorders (how can we more charitably designate them?) much resembling some of those described in the following pages, may make their appearance among people who have had all the advantages of an enlightened education, and every opportunity of enlarging their minds by a free intercourse with refined society.

I thus venture to hope, that by bestowing a leisure hour on this small portion of medical history, the physician may enlarge his knowledge of disease, and the moralist may gather a hint for the intellectual improvement of his fellow-men. The author has, however, a more extended object in view—the histories of particular epidemics are with him but the data from which we are to deduce the general laws that govern human health in the aggregate. Whether there be such an *entity* as collective organic life, and whether, as a consequence, there exist general laws which regulate its healthy or morbid condition, I do not here undertake to determine; but the notion is peculiar, and in order that it may be more fully exposed to the reader, I have translated, as an introduction to the present volume, an Appeal which Dr. Hecker has

made to the medical profession of his own country for assistance in his undertaking. If, in the course of the remarks contained in this address, he has been somewhat severe in his censure of the neglect, both in this country and in France, of the study of Medical History, I freely confess myself to be one of those who are more anxious to profit by his castigation than to dispute its justice.

I have added a few Notes, which I trust will be found not inapplicable. They consist chiefly of parallel accounts in illustration of what is set forth in the text; and with the same view, I have thrown together in No. V. of the Appendix, some Histories of Local Epidemics, and have referred to some single cases, which seem to me to have a peculiar interest in connection with the subject of this work, and to render it, on the whole, more complete.

PREFACE.

THE diseases which form the subject of the present investigation afford a deep insight into the workings of the human mind in a state of society. They are a portion of history, and will never return in the form in which they are there recorded; but they expose a vulnerable part of man—the instinct of imitation—and are therefore very nearly connected with human life in the aggregate. It appeared worth while to describe diseases which are propagated on the beams of light—on the wings of thought, which convulse the mind by the excitement of the senses, and wonderfully affect the nerves, the media of its will and of its feelings. It seemed worth

while to attempt to place these disorders between the epidemics of a less refined origin, which affect the body more than the soul, and all those passions and emotions which border on the vast domain of disease, ready at every moment to pass the boundary. Should we be able to deduce from the grave facts of history here developed, a convincing proof that the human race, amidst the creation which surrounds it, moves in body and soul as an individual whole, the Author might hope that he had approached nearer to his ideal of a grand comprehension of diseases in time and space, and be, encouraged by the participation of contemporaries, zealous in the search of truth, to proceed along the path which he has already entered, in prosecuting the investigation.

ADDRESS

TO THE

PHYSICIANS OF GERMANY.

By I. F. C. HECKER.

It has long been my earnest desire to address my honoured Colleagues, especially those with whom I feel myself connected by congeniality of sentiment, in order to impress on them a subject in which science is deeply interested, and which, conformably to the plain declaration of Nature herself, is one of the most exalted and important which can be submitted to the researches of the learned. I mean the investigation of Epidemic Diseases, on a scale commensurate with the extent of our

exertions in other departments, and worthy of the age in which we live. It is, with justice, required of medical men, since their sole business is with life, that they should regard it in the right point of view. They are expected to have a perception of life, as it exists individually and collectively: in the former, to bear in mind the general system of creation; in the latter, to demonstrate the connection and signification of the individual phenomenon, to discern the one by the aid of the other, and thus to penetrate, with becoming reverence, into the sanctuary of cosmical and microcosmical science. This expectation is not extravagant, and the truth of the principles which the medical explorer of nature deduces from it, is so obvious that it seems scarcely possible that any doubts should be entertained on the subject.

Yet we may ask, Has the medical science of our days, with all the splendour which surrounds it, with the perfection of which it boasts, satisfied this demand? This ques-

tion we are obliged to answer in the negative.

Let us consider only the doctrine of diseases, which has been cultivated since the commencement of scientific study. It has grown up amid the illumination of knowledge and the gloom of ignorance; it has been nurtured by the storms of centuries; its monuments of ancient and modern times cannot be numbered, and it speaks clearly to the initiated, in the languages of all civilized nations. Yet, hitherto, it has given an account only of individual diseases, so far as the human mind can discern their nature. In this it has succeeded admirably, and its success becomes every year greater and more extensive.

But if we extend our inquiries to the Diseases of Nations, and of the whole human race, science is mute, as if it were not her province to take cognizance of them, and shows us only an immeasurable and unexplored country, which many sup-

pose to be merely a barren desert, because no one to whose voice they are wont to listen, gives any information respecting it. Small is the number of those who have traversed it; often have they arrested their steps, filled with admiration at striking phenomena; have beheld inexhaustible mines waiting only for the hand of the labourer, and, from contemplating the development of collective organic life, which science no where else displays to them on so magnificent a scale, have experienced all the sacred joy of the naturalist to whom a higher source of knowledge has been opened. Yet could they not make themselves heard in the noisy tumult of the markets, and still less answer the innumerable questions directed to them by many, as from one mouth, not indeed to inquire after the truth, but to obtain a confirmation of an anciently received opinion, which originated in the fifth century before our æra.

Hence it is, that the doctrine of Epide-

mics, surrounded by the other flourishing branches of medicine, remains alone unfruitful—we might almost say stunted in its growth. For, to the weighty opinions of Hippocrates, to the doctrines of Fracastoro which contain the experience of the much-tried Middle Ages, and lastly to the observations of Sydenham, only trifling and isolated facts have been added. Beyond these facts there exist, even up to the present times, only assumptions which might, long since, have been reduced to their original nothingness, had that serious spirit of inquiry prevailed which comprehends space and penetrates ages.

No epidemic ever prevailed during which the need of more accurate information was not felt, and during which the wish of the learned was not loudly expressed, to become acquainted with the secret springs of such stupendous engines of destruction. Was the disease of a new character?—the spirit of inquiry was roused among physicians; nor were the most eminent of them

ever deficient either in courage or in zeal for investigation. When the glandular plague first made its appearance as an universal epidemic, whilst the more pusillanimous, haunted by visionary fears, shut themselves up in their closets, some physicians at Constantinople, astonished at the phenomenon, opened the boils of the deceased. The like has occurred both in ancient and modern times, not without favourable results for science; nay, more matured views excited an eager desire to become acquainted with similar or still greater visitations among the ancients; but as later ages have always been fond of referring to Grecian antiquity, the learned of those times, from a partial and meagre predilection, were contented with the descriptions of Thucydides, even where nature had revealed, in infinite diversity, the workings of her powers.

These researches, if indeed they deserved that name, were never scientific or comprehensive. They never seized but upon a part,

and no sooner had the mortality ceased, than the scarcely awakened zeal relapsed into its former indifference to the interesting phenomena of nature, in the same way as abstemiousness, which had ever been practised during epidemics, only as a constrained virtue, gave place, as soon as the danger was over, to unbridled indulgence. This inconstancy might almost bring to our mind the pious Byzantines who, on the shock of an earthquake, in 529, which appeared as the prognostic of the great epidemic, prostrated themselves before their altars by thousands, and sought to excel each other in Christian self-denial and benevolence; but no sooner did they feel the ground firm beneath their feet, than they again abandoned themselves, without remorse, to all the vices of the metropolis. May I be pardoned for this comparison of scientific zeal with other human excitements? Alas! even this is a virtue which few practise, for its own sake, and which, with the multitude, stands quite

as much in need as any other, of the incentives of fear and reward.

But we are constrained to acknowledge that among our medical predecessors, these incentives were scarcely ever sufficiently powerful to induce them to leave us circumstantial and scientific accounts of contemporary epidemics, which, nevertheless, have, even in historical times, afflicted in almost numberless visitations, the whole human race. Still less did it occur to them to take a more exalted stand, whence they could comprehend at one view, these stupendous phenomena of organic collective life, in which the whole spirit of humanity powerfully and wonderfully moves, and thus to regard them as one whole, in which higher laws of Nature, uniting together the utmost diversity of individual parts, might be anticipated or perceived.

Here a wide, and almost unfathomable chasm occurs in the science of medicine, which, in this age of mature judgment and

multifarious learning cannot, as formerly, be overlooked. History alone can fill it up; she alone can give to the Doctrine of Diseases that importance without which its application is limited to occurrences of the moment, whereas the development of the phenomena of life, during extensive periods, is no less a problem of research for the philosopher, who makes the boundless science of Nature his study, than the revolutions of the planet on which we move. In this region of inquiry the very stones have a language, and the inscriptions are yet legible which, before the creation of man, were engraved by organic life, in wondrous forms on eternal tablets. Exalted ideas of the monuments of primæval antiquity are here excited, and the forms of the antemundane ways and creations of Nature are conjured up from the inmost bosom of the earth, in order to throw their bright beaming light upon the surface of the present.

Medicine extends not so far. The remains of animals make us indeed acquainted, even now, with diseases to which the brute creation was subject long ere the waters overflowed, and the mountains sunk down; but the investigation which is our more immediate object, scarcely reaches to the beginning of human culture. Records of remote and of proximate eras, lie before us in rich abundance. They speak of the deviations and destructions of human life, of exterminated and newly-formed nations; they lay before us stupendous facts, which we are called upon to recognise and expound in order to solve this exalted problem. If physicians cannot boast of having unrolled these records with the avidity of true explorers of Nature, they may find some excuse in the nature of the inquiry—for the characters are dead, and the spirits of which they are the magic symbols, manifest themselves only to him who knows how to adjure them. Epidemics leave no corporeal traces, whence their history is

perhaps more intellectual than the science of the Geologist, who, on his side, possesses the advantage of treating on subjects which strike the senses, and are therefore more attractive,—such as the impressions of plants no longer extant, and the skeletons of lost races of animals. This, however, does not entirely exculpate us from the charge of neglecting our science, in a quarter where the most important facts are to be unveiled. It is high time to make up for what has been left unaccomplished, if we would not remain idle and mean-spirited in the rear of other naturalists.

I was animated by these and similar reflections, and excited too by passing events, when I undertook to write the history of the "Black Death." With some anxiety, I sent this book into the world, for it was scarcely to be expected that it would be every where received with indulgence, since it belonged to an hitherto unknown department of historical research, the utility

of which might not be obvious in our practical times. Yet I soon received encouragement, not only from learned friends, but also from other men of distinguished merit, on whose judgment I placed great reliance, and thus I was led to hope that it was not in vain, and without some advantage to science, that I had unveiled the dismal picture of a long departed age.

This work I have followed up by a treatise on a nervous disorder, which, for the first time, appeared in the same century, as an epidemic, with symptoms that can be accounted for only by the spirit of the Middle Ages, symptoms which, in the manner of the diffusion of the disease among thousands of people, and of its propagation for more than two centuries, exercised a demoniacal influence on the human race, yet in close, though uncongenial alliance, with kindlier feelings. I have prepared materials for various other subjects, so far as the resources at my disposal extend, and I may hope, if circumstances prove favour-

able, to complete by degrees, the history of a more extensive series of Epidemics on the same plan as the "Black Death," and the "Dancing Mania."

Amid the accumulated materials which past ages afford, the powers and the life of one individual, even with the aid of previous study, are insufficient to complete a comprehensive history of Epidemics. The zealous activity of many must be exerted if we would speedily possess a work which is so much wanted, in order that we may not encounter new epidemics with culpable ignorance of analogous phenomena. How often has it appeared on the breaking out of epidemics, as if the experience of so many centuries had been accumulated in vain. Men gazed at the phenomena with astonishment, and even before they had a just perception of their nature, pronounced their opinions, which, as they were divided into strongly opposed parties, they defended with all the ardour of zealots, wholly unconscious of the majesty of all-governing nature. In

the descriptive branches of natural history, a person would infallibly expose himself to the severest censure, who should attempt to describe some hitherto unknown natural production, whether animal or vegetable, if he were ignorant of the allied genera and species, and perhaps neither a botanist nor zoologist; this, however, was but too frequently the case with epidemics, and men were insensible to the justest reproof. Thus it has ever been, and for this reason we cannot apply to ourselves in this department, the significant words of Bacon, that we are the ancients, and our forefathers the moderns, for we are equally remote, with them, from a scientific and comprehensive knowledge of epidemics. This might, and ought to be otherwise, in an age, which, in other respects, may, with justice, boast of a rich diversity of knowledge, and of a rapid progress in the natural sciences.

If in the form of an address to the physicians of Germany, I express the wish to

see such a melancholy state of things remedied, the nature of the subject requires that, with the exception of the still prevailing Cholera, remarkable universal epidemics should be selected for investigation. They form the grand epochs, according to which those epidemics which are less extensive, but not, on that account, less worthy of observation, naturally range themselves. Far be it from me to recommend any fixed series, or even the plan and method to be pursued in treating the subject. It would, perhaps, be, on the whole, most advantageous, if my honoured Colleagues, who attend to this request, were to commence with those epidemics for which they possess complete materials, and that entirely according to their own plan, without adopting any model for imitation, for in this manner simple historical truth will be best elicited. Should, it however, be found impracticable to furnish historical descriptions of entire epidemics, a task often attended with difficulties, interesting fragments of all kinds, for which there are

rich treasures in MSS. and scarce works in various places, would be no less welcome and useful towards the great object of preparing a collective history of epidemics.

Up to the present moment, it might almost seem that the most essential preliminaries are wanting for the accomplishment of such an undertaking. The study of medical history is every where at a low ebb;—in France and England scarcely a trace remains, to the most serious detriment of the whole domain of medicine; in Germany too, there are but few who suspect what inexhaustible stores of instructive truth are lying dormant within their power; they may, perhaps, class them among theoretical doctrines, and commend the laborious investigation of them without being willing to recognise their spirit. None of the Universities of Germany, whose business it ought to be to provide, in this respect, for the prosperity of the inheritance committed to their charge, can boast a Professor's chair for the History of Medicine; nay, in many, it

is so entirely unknown, that it is not even regarded as an object of secondary importance, so that it is to be apprehended that the fame of German erudition, may, at least in medicine, gradually vanish, and our medical knowledge become, as practical indeed, but at the same time as assuming, as mechanical, and as defective, as that of France and England. Even those noble institutions, the Academies, in which the spirit of the eighteenth century still lingers, and whose more peculiar province it is to explore the rich pages of science, have not entered upon the history of Epidemics, and by their silence have encouraged the unfounded and injurious supposition, that this field is desolate and unfruitful.

All these obstacles are indeed great, but to determined and persevering exertion they are not insuperable; and, though we cannot conceal them from ourselves, we should not allow them to daunt our spirit. There is, in Germany, a sufficiency of intel-

lectual power to overcome them; let this power be combined, and exert itself in active co-operation. Sooner or later a new road must be opened for Medical Science. Should the time not yet have arrived, I have at least endeavoured to discharge my duty, by attempting to point out its future direction.

DANCING MANIA

IN

GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS.

I.—DANCING MANIA

IN

GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS.

1.—St. John's Dance.

The effects of the *Black Death* had not yet subsided, and the graves of millions of its victims were scarcely closed, when a strange delusion arose in Germany, which took possession of the minds of men, and, in spite of the divinity of our nature, hurried away body and soul into the magic circle of hellish superstition. It was a convulsion which in the most extraordinary manner infuriated the human frame, and excited the astonishment of contemporaries for more that two centuries, since which

time it has never reappeared. It was called the dance of St. John or of St. Vitus, on account of the Bacchantic leaps by which it was characterized, and which gave to those affected, whilst performing their wild dance, and screaming and foaming with fury, all the appearance of persons possessed. It did not remain confined to particular localities, but was propagated by the sight of the sufferers, like a demoniacal epidemic, over the whole of Germany, and the neighbouring countries to the north-west, which were already prepared for its reception by the prevailing opinions of the times.

So early as the year 1374, assemblages of men and women were seen at Aix la Chapelle who had come out of Germany, and who, united by one common delusion, exhibited to the public both in the streets and in the churches the following strange spectacle[1]. They formed circles hand in hand, and appearing to have lost all control over

[1] *Odor. Raynald,* Annal. Ecclesiastic A. 1374. Lucæ 1752. fol. Tom. VII. p. 252.

their senses, continued dancing, regardless of the bystanders, for hours together, in wild delirium, until at length they fell to the ground in a state of exhaustion. They then complained of extreme oppression, and groaned as if in the agonies of death, until they were swathed in cloths bound tightly round their waists, on which they again recovered, and remained free from complaint until the next attack. This practice of swathing was resorted to on account of the tympany which followed these spasmodic ravings, but patients were frequently relieved in a less artificial manner, by thumping and trampling upon the parts affected. While dancing they neither saw nor heard, being insensible to external impressions through the senses, but were haunted by visions, their fancies conjuring up spirits whose names[1] they shrieked out;

[1] *John Wier's* ample Catalogue of Spirits gives no information on this point. Pseudomonarchia dæmonum. Opera omnia, Amstelod. 1660. 4to. p. 649.—*Raynald* mentions the word *Frisckes* as the name of a

and some of them afterwards asserted that they felt as if they had been immersed in a stream of blood, which obliged them to leap so high[1]. Others, during the paroxysm saw the heavens open and the Saviour enthroned with the Virgin Mary, as indeed the religious notions of the age were strangely and variously reflected in their imaginations[2].

Where the disease was completely developed, the attack commenced with epileptic convulsions[3]. Those affected fell to the

spirit; but this mistake is easily accounted for by his ignorance of the language. For according to the Chronicle of Cologne, the St. John's dancers sang during their paroxysm: "Here Sent Johan, so so, *vrisch* ind vro, here sent Johan." St. John so, so, brisk and cheerful, St. John. Die Cronica van der hilliger Stat van Coellen, fol. 277. Coellen. 1499. fol.

[1] *Cyr. Spangenberg.* Adels-Spiegel—*Mirror of Nobility*, a detailed historical account of what nobility is, &c. Schmalkalden, 1591. fol. Fol. 403. b.

[2] *Petr. de Herentals*, Appendix, No. I.

[3] *Jo. Trithem.* Chronic. Sponheimense. A. 1374. Opera historic. Francof. 1601. fol. p. 332. Also: *Abrah. Bzovii* Annal. Ecclesiastic. Tom. XIV. Colon. Agripp. 1625. fol. Ann. 1374. (Maniaca passio. S. Johannis chorea.)

ground senseless, panting and labouring for breath. They foamed at the mouth, and suddenly springing up began their dance amidst strange contortions. Yet the malady doubtless made its appearance very variously, and was modified by temporary or local circumstances, whereof non-medical contemporaries but imperfectly noted the essential particulars, accustomed as they were to confound their observation of natural events with their notions of the world of spirits.

It was but a few months ere this demoniacal disease had spread over the neighbouring Netherlands from Aix la Chapelle where it appeared in July[1]. In Liege,

[1] *Jo. Pistorii* Rerum Familiarumque Belgicarum Chronicon magnum. Francof. 1654. fol. p. 319. Here the persons affected are called *dansatores, chorisantes*. See the whole passage in the Appendix, No. II. Compare Incerti auctoris vetus chronicon Belgicum, Matthæi veteris ævi Analecta. Hag. com. 1738. 4to. Tom. I. p. 51. "Anno MCCCLXXIV. the *dansers* appeared. Gens impacata cadit, dudum cruciata salvat." This should be salivat; a quotation from a Latin poem not now extant.

Utrecht, Tongres, and many other towns of Belgium, the dancers appeared with garlands in their hair, and their waists girt with cloths, that they might, as soon as the paroxysm was over, receive immediate relief on the attack of the tympany. This bandage was, by the insertion of a stick, easily twisted tight: many, however, obtained more relief from kicks and blows, which they found numbers of persons ready to administer; for wherever the dancers appeared the people assembled in crowds to gratify their curiosity with the frightful spectacle. At length the increasing number of the affected excited no less anxiety than the attention that was paid to them. In towns and villages they took possession of the religious houses, processions were every where instituted on their account, and masses were said and hymns were sung, while the disease itself, of the demoniacal origin of which no one entertained the least doubt, excited every where astonishment and horror. In Liege the priests had recourse to

exorcisms, and endeavoured by every means in their power to allay an evil which threatened so much danger to themselves; for the possessed assembling in multitudes, frequently poured forth imprecations against them, and menaced their destruction. They intimidated the people also to such a degree that there was an express ordinance issued that no one should make any but square toed shoes, because these fanatics had manifested a morbid dislike to the pointed shoes which had come into fashion immediately after the *great mortality* in 1350[1].

[1] The Limburg Chronicle, published by *C. D. Vogel.* Marburg, 1828. 8vo. p. 27. This singular phenomenon cannot but remind us of the "Demon of Fashion," of the middle ages. Extravagant as the love of dress was after the middle of the fourteenth century, the opposition of the enemies of fashion was equally great, and they let slip no opportunity of crying down every change or innovation as the work of the devil. Hence it is extremely probable that the fanatic penitential sermons of zealous priests excited this singular aversion of the St. Vitus dancers. In later times also, signs and wonders took place, on account of things equally insignificant, and the ury of the possessed was directed against the fashions.

They were still more irritated at the sight of red colours, the influence of which on the disordered nerves might lead us to imagine an extraordinary accordance between this spasmodic malady and the condition of infuriated animals, but in the St. John's dancers this excitement was probably connected with apparitions consequent upon their convulsions. There were likewise some of them who were unable to endure the sight of persons weeping[1]. The clergy seemed to become daily more and more confirmed in their belief that those who were affected were a kind of sectarians, and on this account they hastened their exorcisms as much as possible, in order that the evil might not spread amongst the higher classes, for hitherto scarcely any but the poor had been attacked, and the few people of respectability among the laity and clergy who were to be found among them, were

Compare *Möhsen's* History of the Sciences in the Mark of Brandenburg, p. 498. f.

[1] *Petr. de Herentals.* Appendix, No. I.

persons whose natural frivolity was unable to withstand the excitement of novelty, even though it proceeded from a demoniacal influence. Some of the affected had indeed themselves declared, when under the influence of priestly forms of exorcism, that if the demons had been allowed only a few weeks more time, they would have entered the bodies of the nobility and princes, and through these have destroyed the clergy. Assertions of this sort, which those possessed uttered whilst in a state which may be compared with that of magnetic sleep, obtained general belief, and passed from mouth to mouth with wonderful additions. The priesthood were, on this account, so much the more zealous in their endeavours to anticipate every dangerous excitement of the people, as if the existing order of things could have been seriously threatened by such incoherent ravings. Their exertions were effectual, for exorcism was a powerful remedy in the fourteenth century; or it might perhaps be that this wild infatuation

terminated in consequence of the exhaustion which naturally ensued from it; at all events in the course of ten or eleven months the St. John's dancers were no longer to be found in any of the cities of Belgium. The evil, however, was too deeply rooted to give way altogether to such feeble attacks[1].

A few months after this dancing malady had made its appearance at Aix la Chapelle, it broke out at Cologne, where the number of those possessed amounted to more than five hundred[2], and about the same time at Metz, the streets of which place are said to have been filled with eleven hundred dancers[3]. Peasants left their ploughs, mechanics their workshops, housewives their domestic duties, to join the wild revels, and this rich commercial city became the

[1] Respecting the exorcisms used, see E. G. *Förstemann*, the Christian Societies of Flagellants. Halle, 1828. 8vo. p. 232.

[2] Limburg Chronicle, p. 71. Cologne Chronicle. Loc. cit. See Appendix, Nos. III. & IV.

[3] Dans la ville y eut des dansans, Tant grands que petits onze cents. Journal de Paris, 1785.

scene of the most ruinous disorder. Secret desires were excited, and but too often found opportunities for wild enjoyment; and numerous beggars, stimulated by vice and misery, availed themselves of this new complaint to gain a temporary livelihood. Girls and boys quitted their parents, and servants their masters, to amuse themselves at the dances of those possessed, and greedily imbibed the poison of mental infection. Above a hundred unmarried women were seen raving about in consecrated and unconsecrated places, and the consequences were soon perceived[1]. Gangs of idle vagabonds, who understood how to imitate to the life the gestures and convulsions of those really affected, roved from place to place seeking maintenance and adventures, and thus, wherever they went, spreading this disgusting spasmodic disease like a plague; for in maladies of this kind the susceptible are infected as easily by the appearance as

[1] *Schenk.* v. *Grafenberg.* Loc. cit.

by the reality. At last it was found necessary to drive away these mischievous guests, who were equally inaccessible to the exorcisms of the priests and the remedies of the physicians. It was not, however, until after four months that the Rhenish cities were able to suppress these impostures, which had so alarmingly increased the original evil. In the meantime, when once called into existence, the plague crept on, and found abundant food in the tone of thought which prevailed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and even, though in a minor degree, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth, causing a permanent disorder of the mind, and exhibiting in those cities to whose inhabitants it was a novelty, scenes as strange as they were detestable.

2.—St. Vitus's Dance[1].

Strasburg was visited by the "Dancing Plague" in the year 1418, and the same

[1] "Chorus Sancti Viti, or St. Vitus' dance; the lascivious dance, Paracelsus calls it, because they that are

infatuation existed among the people there, as in the towns of Belgium and the Lower Rhine[1]. Many who were seized at the

taken with it, can do nothing but dance till they be dead, or cured, It is so called for that the parties so troubled were wont to go to St. Vitus for help; and, after they had danced there awhile, they were certainly freed. 'Tis strange to hear how long they will dance, and in what manner, over stools, forms, tables; even great bellied women sometimes (and yet never hurt their children) will dance so long that they can stir neither hand nor foot, but seem to be quite dead. One in red clothes they cannot abide. Musick above all things they love; and therefore magistrates in Germany will hire musicians to play to them, and some lusty, sturdy companions to dance with them. This disease hath been very common in Germany, as appears by those relations of Schenkius, and Paracelsus in his book of madness, who brags how many several persons he hath cured of it. Felix Platerus (*de Mentis Alienat. cap.* 3.) reports of a woman in Basle whom he saw, that danced a whole month together. The Arabians call it a kind of *palsie*. Bodine, in his fifth book, *de* Repub. cap. 1., speaks of this infirmity; Monavius, in his last epistle to Scoltizius, and in another to Dudithus, where you may read more of it."—*Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy*, Vol. I. p. 15.—Ed.

[1] *J. of Königshoven*, the oldest German Chronicle in existence. The contents are general, but devoted more

sight of those affected, excited attention at first by their confused and absurd behaviour, and then by their constantly following the swarms of dancers. These were seen day and night passing through the streets, accompanied by musicians playing on bagpipes, and by innumerable spectators attracted by curiosity, to which were added anxious parents and relations, who came to look after those among the misguided multitude who belonged to their respective families. Imposture and profligacy played their part in this city

exclusively to Alsace and Strasburg, published by *Schiltern*, Strasburg, 1698. 4to. Observat. 21. of St. Vitus's Dance. p. 1085. f.

> " Viel hundert fingen zu Strafsburg an
> Zu tanzen und springen Frau und Mann,
> Am offnen Markt, Gassen und Strassen
> Tag und Nacht ihrer viel nicht assen
> Bis ihn das Wüthen wieder gelag,
> St. Vits Tanz ward genannt die Plag."

" Many hundreds of men and women began to dance and jump in the public market-place, the lanes, and the streets of Strasburg. Many of them ate nothing for days and nights, until their mania again subsided. The plague was called St. Vitus's Dance."

also, but the morbid delusion itself seems to have predominated. On this account religion could only bring provisional aid, and therefore the town-council benevolently took an interest in the afflicted. They divided them into separate parties, to each of which they appointed responsible superintendents to protect them from harm, and perhaps also to restrain their turbulence. They were thus conducted on foot and in carriages to the chapels of St. Vitus, near Zabern and Rotestein, where priests were in attendance to work upon their misguided minds by masses and other religious ceremonies. After divine worship was completed, they were led in solemn procession to the altar, where they made some small offering of alms, and where it is probable that many were, through the influence of devotion and the sanctity of the place, cured of this lamentable aberration. It is worthy of observation, at all events, that the dancing mania did not recommence at the altars of the saint, and that from him alone assistance

was implored, and through his miraculous interposition a cure was expected, which was beyond the reach of human skill. The personal history of St. Vitus is by no means unimportant in this matter. He was a Sicilian youth who, together with Modestus and Crescentia, suffered martyrdom at the time of the persecution of the christians, under Diocletian, in the year 303[1]. The

[1] *Cæs. Baron.* Annales ecclesiastic. Tom. II. p. 819. Colon. Agripp. 1609. fol. See the more ample Acta Sanctorum Junii. (the 15th of June is St. Vitus's day) Tom. II. p. 1013. Antwerp, 1698. fol., from which we shall merely add that Mazara, in Sicily, is supposed to have been the birth-place of our Saint, and that his father's name was *Hylas*; that he went from thence with *Crescentia* (probably his nurse) and *Modestus* to Lucania, with both of whom he suffered martyrdom under *Diocletian*. They are all said to have been buried at Florence, and it was not long before the miraculous powers of St. Vitus, which had already manifested themselves in his lifetime, were acknowledged throughout Italy. The most celebrated of his chapels were situated on the Promontory of Sicily (called by his name), in Rome and in Polignano, whither many pilgrimages were made by the sick. Persons who had been bitten by mad dogs believed that they would find an infallible cure at his altars, though the power of the Saint in curing wounds

legends respecting him are obscure, and he would certainly have been passed over

of this kind was afterwards disputed by the followers of St. Hubertus, the Saint of the Chase. In 672, his body was with much pomp moved to Apulia, but soon after the priests of many churches and chapels in Italy, gave out that they were in possession of portions of the saint's body which worked miracles. In the eighth century the veneration of this youthful martyr extended itself to France, and the honour of possessing his body was conferred on the church of St. Denys. By command of the Pope it was solemnly delivered on the 19th of March, 836, by the Abbot *Hilduwinus*, of St. Denys, to the Abbot *Warinus*, of Corvey, (founded in 822). On its way thither, which occupied three months (to the 13th of June), many miracles were performed, and the subsequent Abbots of Corvey were able for centuries to maintain the popular belief in the miraculous healing power of their relics, which had indiscriminate influence on all diseases, more especially on those of a demoniacal kind. See Monachi anonymi Historia translationis S. Viti. In *G. H. Pertz*, Monumenta Germaniæ Historica. Tom. II. Hannov. 1828. fol. p. 576. As a proof of the great veneration for St. Vitus in the fourteenth century, we may further mention that Charles IV. dedicated to him the Cathedral of Prague, of which he had laid the foundation, and caused him to be proclaimed Patron Saint of Bohemia, and a nominal body of the holy martyr was for this purpose brought from Parma. Act. Sanctor. loc. cit.

without notice among the innumerable apocryphal martyrs of the first centuries, had not the transfer of his body to St. Denys, and thence, in the year 836, to Corvey, raised him to a higher rank. From this time forth, it may be supposed that many miracles were manifested at his new sepulchre, which were of essential service in confirming the Roman faith among the Germans, and St. Vitus was soon ranked among the fourteen saintly helpers (Nothhelfer or Apotheker[1]). His altars were multiplied, and the people had recourse to them in all kinds of distresses, and revered him as a powerful intercessor. As the worship of these saints was however at that

[1] Probably a corruption of Apotropæi. The expression is constantly met with; for example, in *Agricola*, Proverbs, No. 497. These are the θεοὶ ἀλεξικάκοι, the dii averrunci of the antients. The fourteen saints, to whose churches (between Bamberg and Coburg,) thousands still annually make pilgrimages, are the following: 1. Georgius. 2. Blasius. 3. Erasmus. 4. Vitus. 5. Pantaleon. 6. Christophorus. 7. Dionysius. 8. Cyriacus. 9. Achatius. 10. Eustachius. 11. Aegidius. 12. Margaretha. 13. Catharina. 14. Barbara.

time stripped of all historical connections, which were purposely obliterated by the priesthood, a legend was invented at the beginning of the fifteenth century, or perhaps even so early as the fourteenth, that St. Vitus had, just before he bent his neck to the sword, prayed to God that he might protect from the dancing mania all those who should solemnize the day of his commemoration, and fast upon its eve, and that thereupon a voice from heaven was heard, saying, "Vitus, thy prayer is accepted[1]." Thus St. Vitus became the patron saint of those afflicted with the dancing plague, as St. Martin, of Tours, was at one time the succourer of persons in small-pox; St. Antonius of those suffering under the "hellish fire," and as St. Margaret was the Juno Lucina of puerperal women.

[1] *J. Agricola.* Sybenhundert und fünffzig Teutscher Sprichwörter. No. 497. Seven hundred and fifty German Proverbs. Hagemau, 1537. 8vo. fol. 248.

3.—Causes.

The connection which John the Baptist had with the dancing mania of the fourteenth century, was of a totally different character. He was originally far from being a protecting saint to those who were attacked, or one who would be likely to give them relief from a malady considered as the work of the devil. On the contrary, the manner in which he was worshipped afforded an important and very evident cause for its development. From the remotest period, perhaps, even so far back as the fourth century, St. John's day was solemnized with all sorts of strange and rude customs, of which the originally mystical meaning was variously disfigured among different nations by superadded relics of heathenism[1]. Thus the Germans transferred to the

[1] *St. Augustine* warned the people against committing excesses and singing profane songs at the festival of St. John: "Nec permittamus solemnitatem sanctam cantica luxuriosa proferendo polluere."—*St. Augusti*

festival of St. John's day an ancient heathen usage, the kindling of the "Nodfyr," which was forbidden them by St. Boniface, and the belief subsists even to the present day that people and animals that have leaped through these flames, or their smoke, are protected for a whole year from fevers and other diseases, as if by a kind of baptism by fire[1]. Bacchanalian dances, which have originated in similar causes among all the rude nations of the earth, and the wild extravagancies of a heated imagination, were the constant accompaniments of this half-heathen, half-

Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Christlichen Archäologie. Vol. III. p. 166. Leipzig. 1820. 8vo. Memorabilia of Christian Archæology.

[1] *Wirthwein* Series chronologic. Epistolarum S. Bonifacii ab ann. 716—755. LVII. Concil. Liptinens. p. 131. XV. De igne fricato de ligno, id est, Nodfyr. See *Joh. Reiskii.* Untersuchung des bei den Alten Teutschen gebräuchlichen heidnischen Nodfyrs, imgleichen des Oster-und Johannis-Feuers. Enquiry respecting the heathen Nodfyrs customary among the ancient Germans, and also the Easter and St. John's fires. Frankfort. 1696. 8vo.

christian, festival. At the period of which we are treating, however, the Germans were not the only people who gave way to the ebullitions of fanaticism in keeping the festival of St. John the Baptist. Similar customs were also to be found among the nations of Southern Europe and of Asia[1], and it is more than probable that the Greeks transferred to the festival of John the Baptist, who is also held in high esteem among

[1] The Bishop *Theodoret* of Cyrus in Syria, states, that at the festival of St. John, large fires were annually kindled in several towns, through which men, women and children jumped; and that young children were carried through by their mothers. He considered this custom as an ancient Asiatic ceremony of purification, similar to that recorded of Ahaz, in 2 Kings, xvi. 3. (Quæstiones in IV. Libr. Regum. Interrogat. 47, p. 352. *Beati Theodoreti*, Episcop. Cyri Opera omnia. Ed. *Jac. Sirmondi*, Lut. Paris. 1642. fol. T. I.) *Zonaras, Balsamon and Photius* speak of the St. John's fires in Constantinople, and the first looks upon it as the remains of an old Grecian custom. See *Reiske*, loc. cit. p. 81. That such different nations should have had the same idea of fixing the purification by fire on St. John's day, is a remarkable coincidence, which perhaps can be accounted for only by its analogy to baptism.

the Mahomedans, a part of their Bacchanalian mysteries, an absurdity of a kind which is but too frequently met with in human affairs. How far a remembrance of the history of St. John's death may have had an influence on this occasion, we would leave learned theologians to decide. It is only of importance here to add, that in Abyssinia, a country entirely separated from Europe, where Christianity has maintained itself in its primeval simplicity against Mahomedanism, John is to this day worshipped, as protecting saint of those who are attacked with the dancing malady[1]. In these fragments of the dominion of mysticism and superstition, historical connection is not to be found.

When we observe, however, that the first dancers in Aix la Chapelle appeared in July with St. John's name in their mouths,

[1] The Life and Adventures of *Nathaniel Pearce*, written by himself, during a residence in Abyssinia from the years 1810 to 1819. Edited by *J. J. Halls*. 2 Vols. 8vo. London, 1831. chap. ix. p. 290.

the conjecture is probable that the wild revels of St. John's day, A.D. 1374, gave rise to this mental plague, which thenceforth has visited so many thousands with incurable aberration of mind, and disgusting distortions of body.

This is rendered so much the more probable, because some months previously the districts in the neighbourhood of the Rhine and the Maine had met with great disasters. So early as February, both these rivers had overflowed their banks to a great extent; the walls of the town of Cologne, on the side next the Rhine, had fallen down, and a great many villages had been reduced to the utmost distress[1]. To this was added the miserable condition of Western and Southern Germany. Neither law nor edict could suppress the incessant feuds of the

[1] *Joann. Trithem.* Annal. Hirsaugiens. Oper. Tom. II. Hirsaug. 1690. fol. p. 263. A. 1374. See the before-mentioned Chronicle of Cologne. fol. 276. b. wherein it is said that the people passed in boats and rafts over the city walls.

Barons, and in Franconia especially, the ancient times of club law appeared to be revived. Security of property there was none; arbitrary will everywhere prevailed; corruption of morals and rude power rarely met with even a feeble opposition; whence it arose that the cruel, but lucrative, persecutions of the Jews, were in many places still practised through the whole of this century, with their wonted ferocity. Thus, throughout the western parts of Germany, and especially in the districts bordering on the Rhine, there was a wretched and oppressed populace; and if we take into consideration, that among their numerous bands many wandered about, whose consciences were tormented with the recollection of the crimes which they had committed during the prevalence of the black plague, we shall comprehend how their despair sought relief in the intoxication of an artificial delirium[1]. There is hence

[1] What took place at the St. John's fires in the middle ages (about 1280) we learn by a communication from

good ground for supposing that the frantic celebration of the festival of St. John, A. D. 1374, only served to bring to a crisis, a malady which had been long impending; and if we would further inquire how a hitherto harmless usage, which, like many others, had but served to keep up superstition, could degenerate into so serious a disease, we must take into account the unusual excitement of men's minds, and the consequences of wretchedness and want. The bowels, which in many were debilitated

the Bishop *Guil. Durantes* of Aquitania (Rationale divinorum officiorum. L. VII. c. 26. In *Reiske* Loc. cit. p. 77.) Bones, horns, and other rubbish, were heaped together to be consumed in smoke, while persons of all ages danced round the flames as if they had been possessed, in the same way as at the Palilia, an ancient Roman lustration by fire, whereat those who took part in them, sprang through a fire made of straw. (Ovid. Met. XIV. 774. Fast. IV. 721.) Others seized burning flambeaux, and made a circuit of the fields, in the supposition that they thereby screened them from danger, while others, again, turned a cart wheel, to represent the retrograde movement of the sun.

by hunger and bad food, were precisely the parts which in most cases were attacked with excruciating pain, and the tympanitic state of the intestines, points out to the intelligent physician, an origin of the disorder which is well worth consideration.

4.—More Ancient Dancing Plagues.

The dancing mania of the year 1374 was in fact, no new disease, but a phenomenon well known in the middle ages, of which many wondrous stories were traditionally current among the people. In the year 1237, upwards of a hundred children were said to have been suddenly seized with this disease at Erfurt, and to have proceeded dancing and jumping along the road to Arnstadt. When they arrived at that place they fell exhausted to the ground, and according to an account of an old chronicle, many of them, after they were taken home by their parents, died, and the rest remained affected to the end of their

lives with a permanent tremor[1]. Another occurrence was related to have taken place on the Mosel bridge at Utrecht, on the 17th day of June, A. D. 1278, when two hundred fanatics began to dance, and would not desist until a priest passed who was carrying the Host to a person that was sick, upon which, as if in punishment of their crime, the bridge gave way, and they were all drowned[2]. A similar event also occurred so early as the year 1027, near the convent church of Kolbig, not far from Bernburg. According to an oft repeated tradition, eighteen peasants, some of whose names are still preserved, are said to have disturbed divine service on Christmas eve, by dancing and brawling in the churchyard,

[1] *J. Chr. Beckmann*, Historia des Fürstenthums Anhalt. Zerbst. History of the Principality of Anhalt. Zerbst. 1710. fol. Part. III. book 4. chap. 4. § 3. p. 467.

[2] *Martini* Minoritæ Flores temporum, in *Jo. Georg. Eccard*, Corpus historiæ medii ævi. Lips. 1723. fol. Tom. I. p. 1632.

whereupon the priest, Ruprecht, inflicted a curse upon them, that they should dance and scream for a whole year without ceasing. This curse is stated to have been completely fulfilled, so that the unfortunate sufferers at length sunk knee deep into the earth, and remained the whole time without nourishment, until they were finally released by the intercession of two pious bishops. It is said, that upon this, they fell into a deep sleep, which lasted three days, and that four of them died; the rest continuing to suffer all their lives from a trembling of their limbs[1]. It is not worth while to separate what may have been true, and what the addition of crafty priests in this strangely distorted story. It is sufficient that it was believed, and related with astonishment and horror throughout the middle ages; so that when there was any ex-

[1] *Beckmann.* Loc. cit. § 1. f. p. 465. where many other observations are made on this well known circumstance. The priest named, is the same who is still known in the nursery tales of children as the *Knecht Ruprecht.*

citing cause for this delirious raving, and wild rage for dancing, it failed not to produce its effects upon men whose thoughts were given up to a belief in wonders and apparitions.

This disposition of mind, altogether so peculiar to the middle ages, and which, happily for mankind, has yielded to an improved state of civilization and the diffusion of popular instruction, accounts for the origin and long duration of this extraordinary mental disorder. The good sense of the people recoiled with horror and aversion from this heavy plague, which, whenever malevolent persons wished to curse their bitterest enemies and adversaries, was long after used as a malediction [1]. The indignation also that was felt by the people at large against the immorality of the age, was proved by their ascribing this frightful affliction to the inefficacy of bap-

[1] "Das dich Sanct Veitstanz ankomme." May you be seized with St. Vitus's Dance. *Joh. Agricola*, Sybenhundert und fünffzig Teutscher Sprichwörter. Hagenau 1537, 8. No. 497, p. 268.

tism by unchaste priests, as if innocent children were doomed to atone, in after years, for this desecration of the sacrament administered by unholy hands[1]. We have already mentioned what perils the priests in the Netherlands incurred from this belief. They now, indeed, endeavoured to hasten their reconciliation with the irritated, and at that time very degenerate people[2], by exorcisms, which, with some, procured them greater respect than ever, because they thus visibly restored thousands of those who were affected. In general, however, there prevailed a want of confi-

[1] *Spangenberg* (Adels-Spiegel. Mirror of Nobility, loc. cit.) in his own forcible manner, thus expresses himself on this subject: "It was afterwards pointed out by some, that these people could not have been properly baptized, or at all events, that their baptism was ineffectual, because they had received it from priests who shamelessly lived in open cohabitation with unchaste harlots. Upon this the lower classes rose in rebellion, and would have killed all the priests." Compare Appendix No. I.

[2] *Bzovii* Annal. ecclesiastic. Loc. cit. 1468.

dence in their efficacy, and then the sacred rites had as little power in arresting the progress of this deeply rooted malady, as the prayers and holy services subsequently had at the altars of the greatly revered martyr St. Vitus. We may therefore ascribe it to accident merely, and to a certain aversion to this demoniacal disease, which seemed to lie beyond the reach of human skill, that we meet with but few and imperfect notices of the St. Vitus's dance in the second half of the fifteenth century. The highly coloured descriptions of the sixteenth century contradict the notion that this mental plague had in any degree diminished in its severity, and not a single fact is to be found which supports the opinion, that any one of the essential symptoms of the disease, not even excepting the tympany, had disappeared, or that the disorder itself had become milder in its attacks. The physicians never, as it seems, throughout the whole of the fifteenth century, undertook the treatment of the dancing

mania, which, according to the prevailing notions, appertained exclusively to the servants of the church. Against demoniacal disorders they had no remedies, and though some at first did promulgate the opinion, that the malady had its origin in natural circumstances, such as a hot temperament, and other causes named in the phraseology of the schools [1], yet these opinions were the less examined, as it did not appear worth while to divide with a jealous priesthood, the care of a host of fanatical vagabonds and beggars.

5.—Physicians.

It was not until the beginning of the sixteenth century that the St. Vitus's dance was made the subject of medical research, and stripped of its unhallowed character as a work of demons. This was effected by Paracelsus, that mighty, but as yet scarcely comprehended reformer of medicine, whose aim it was to withdraw diseases from the

[1] See Appendix, Nos. III. and IV.

pale of miraculous interpositions and saintly influences, and explain their causes upon principles deduced from his knowledge of the human frame. " We will not however admit that the saints have power to inflict diseases, and that these ought to be named after them, although many there are, who in their theology, lay great stress on this supposition, ascribing them rather to God than to nature, which is but idle talk. We dislike such nonsensical gossip as is not supported by symptoms, but only by faith, which is a thing not human, whereon the gods themselves set no value."

Such were the words which Paracelsus addressed to his contemporaries, who were as yet incapable of appreciating doctrines of this sort; for the belief in enchantment still remained every where unshaken, and faith in the world of spirits still held men's minds in so close a bondage that thousands were, according to their own conviction, given up as a prey to the devil; while at the command of religion as well as of law,

countless piles were lighted, by the flames of which human society was to be purified.

Paracelsus divides the St. Vitus's dance into three kinds. First, that which arises from imagination (Vitista, Chorea imaginativa, æstimativa), by which the original dancing plague is to be understood. Secondly, that which arises from sensual desires, depending on the will (Chorea lasciva). Thirdly, that which arises from corporeal causes (Chorea naturalis, coacta), which, according to a strange notion of his own, he explained by maintaining, that in certain vessels which are susceptible of an internal pruriency, and thence produce laughter, the blood is set in commotion, in consequence of an alteration in the vital spirits, whereby involuntary fits of intoxicating joy, and a propensity to dance, are occasioned[1]. To this notion he was, no

[1] *Theophrasti Bombast von Hohenheym*, 7 Buch in der Artzney. Von den Krankheiten, die der Vernunft berauben. Of the diseases which produce insanity. Tract I.

doubt, led from having observed a milder form of St. Vitus's dance, not uncommon in his time, which was accompanied by involuntary laughter; and which bore a resemblance to the hysterical laughter of the moderns, except that it was characterized by more pleasurable sensations, and by an extravagant propensity to dance. There was no howling, screaming, and jumping, as in the severer form; neither was the disposition to dance by any means insuperable. Patients thus affected, although they had not a complete controul over their understandings, yet were sufficiently self-possessed during the attack, to obey the directions which they received. There were even some among them who did not dance at all, but only felt an involuntary impulse to allay the internal sense of disquietude, which is the usual forerunner of an attack of this kind, by laughter, and quick walking car-

chap. 3. p. 491. Tract II. chap. 3. p. 501. Opera. Strassburg, 1616. fol. Tom. I.

ried to the extent of producing fatigue [1]. This disorder, so different from the original type, evidently approximates to the modern chorea; or rather is in perfect accordance with it, even to the less essential symptom of laughter. A mitigation in the form of the dancing mania had thus clearly taken place at the commencement of the sixteenth century.

On the communication of the St. Vitus's dance by sympathy, Paracelsus, in his peculiar language, expresses himself with great spirit, and shows a profound knowledge of the nature of sensual impressions, which find their way to the heart,—the seat of joys and emotions,—which overpower the opposition of reason; and whilst "all other qualities and natures" are subdued, incessantly impel the patient, in consequence of his original compliance, and his all conquering imagination, to imitate what

[1] Chorea procursiva of the Moderns. *Bernt*, Monographia Choreæ Sti Viti. Prag 1810. p. 25.

he has seen. On his treatment of the disease, we cannot bestow any great praise, but must be content with the remark, that it was in conformity with the notions of the age in which he lived. For the first kind, which often originated in passionate excitement, he had a mental remedy, the efficacy of which is not to be despised, if we estimate its value in connection with the prevalent opinions of those times. The patient was to make an image of himself in wax or resin, and by an effort of thought to concentrate all his blasphemies and sins in it. "Without the intervention of any other person, to set his whole mind and thoughts concerning these oaths in the image;" and when he had succeeded in this, he was to burn the image, so that not a particle of it should remain [1]. In all this there was no

[1] This proceeding was, however, no invention of his, but an imitation of a usual mode of enchantment by means of wax figures, (per icunculas). The witches made a wax image of the person who was to be bewitched; in order to torment him, they stuck it full of pins, or melted it

mention made of St. Vitus, or any of the other mediatory saints, which is accounted for by the circumstance, that at this time, an open rebellion against the Romish Church had begun, and the worship of saints was by many rejected as idolatrous[1]. For the second kind of St. Vitus's dance, arising from sensual irritation, with which

before the fire. The books on magic, of the middle ages, are full of such things; though the reader who may wish to obtain information on this subject, need not go so far back. Only eighty years since, the learned and celebrated *Storch*, of the school of *Stahl*, published a treatise on witchcraft, worthy of the fourteenth century. "Abhandlung von Kinderkrankheiten." Treatise on the Diseases of Children. Vol. IV. p. 228. Eisenach, 1751-8.

The Ancients were in the habit of employing wax in incantations.

Thus Simoetha in Theocritus:

Ὡς τοῦτον τὸν καρὸν ἐγὼ σὺν δαίμονι τάκω,
Ὡς τάκοιθ' ὑπ' ἔρωτος ὁ Μύνδιος αὐτίκα Δίλφις.

See Potter's Antiquities, Vol. II. p. 251.

and Horace—

"Lanea et effigies erat, altera cerea."

Lib. 1. *Sat.* 8. *l.* 30.

—Tr.

[1] See *Agricola*. Loc. cit. p. 269. No. 498.

women were far more frequently affected than men, Paracelsus recommended harsh treatment and strict fasting. He directed that the patients should be deprived of their liberty; placed in solitary confinement, and made to sit in an uncomfortable place, until their misery brought them to their senses and to a feeling of penitence. He then permitted them gradually to return to their accustomed habits. Severe corporal chastisement was not omitted; but on the other hand, angry resistance on the part of the patient was to be sedulously avoided, on the ground that it might increase his malady, or even destroy him: moreover, where it seemed proper, Paracelsus allayed the excitement of the nerves by immersion in cold water. On the treatment of the third kind we shall not here enlarge. It was to be effected by all sorts of wonderful remedies, composed of the quintessences; and it would require, to render it intelligible, a more extended exposition of peculiar principles than suits our present purpose.

6.—Decline and termination of the Dancing Plague.

About this time the St. Vitus's dance began to decline, so that milder forms of it appeared more frequently, while the severer cases became more rare; and even in these, some of the important symptoms gradually disappeared. Paracelsus makes no mention of the tympanites as occurring after the attacks, although it may occasionally have occurred; and Schenck von Graffenberg, a celebrated physician of the latter half of the sixteenth century [1], speaks of this disease as having been frequent only in the time of his forefathers; his descriptions however are applicable to the whole of that century, and to the close of the fifteenth [2]. The St. Vitus's

[1] *Johann Schenck von Graffenberg*, born 1530, took his his degree at Tübingen in 1554. He passed the greater part of his life as physician to the corporation of Freiburg in the Breisgau, and died in 1598.

[2] *J. Schenkii a Graffenberg* Observationum medicarum rariorum Libri VII. Lugdun. 1643. fol. L. I. Obs. VIII. p. 136.

dance attacked people of all stations, especially those who led a sedentary life, such as shoemakers and tailors; but even the most robust peasants abandoned their labours in the fields, as if they were possessed by evil spirits; and thus those affected were seen assembling indiscriminately, from time to time, at certain appointed places, and unless prevented by the lookers on, continuing to dance without intermission, until their very last breath was expended.) Their fury and extravagance of demeanour so completely deprived them of their senses, that many of them dashed their brains out against the walls and corners of buildings, or rushed headlong into rapid rivers, where they found a watery grave. Roaring and foaming as they were, the bystanders could only succeed in restraining them by placing benches and chairs in their way, so that their strength might be exhausted by the high leaps they were thus tempted to take. As soon as this was the case, they fell as it were lifeless to the ground, and, by very

slow degrees, again recovered their strength. Many there were, who even with all this exertion, had not expended the violence of the tempest which raged within them, but awoke with newly revived powers, and again and again mixed with the crowd of dancers, until at length the violent excitement of their disordered nerves was allayed by the great involuntary exertion of their limbs; and the mental disorder was calmed by the extreme exhaustion of the body. Thus the attacks themselves were in these cases, as in their nature they are in all nervous complaints, necessary crises of an inward morbid condition, which was transferred from the sensorium to the nerves of motion, and at an earlier period to the abdominal plexus, where a deep seated derangement of the system was perceptible from the secretion of flatus in the intestines.

The cure effected by these stormy attacks was in many cases so perfect, that some patients returned to the factory or the plough as if nothing had happened. Others,

on the contrary, paid the penalty of their folly by so total a loss of power, that they could not regain their former health, even by the employment of the most strengthening remedies. Medical men were astonished to observe that women in an advanced state of pregnancy were capable of going through an attack of the disease, without the slightest injury to their offspring, which they protected merely by a bandage passed round the waist. Cases of this kind were not unfrequent so late as Schenck's time. That patients should be violently affected by music, and their paroxysms brought on and increased by it, is natural with such nervous disorders; where deeper impressions are made through the ear, which is the most intellectual of all the organs, than through any of the other senses. On this account the magistrates hired musicians for the purpose of carrying the St. Vitus's dancers so much the quicker through the attacks, and directed, that athletic men should be sent among them

in order to complete the exhaustion which had been often observed to produce a good effect [1]. At the same time there was a prohibition against wearing red garments, because, at the sight of this colour, those affected became so furious, that they flew at the persons who wore it, and were so bent upon doing them an injury that they could with difficulty be restrained. They frequently tore their own clothes whilst in the paroxysm, and were guilty of other impropriе-

[1] It is related by *Felix Plater* (born 1536, † 1614) that he remembered in his youth the authorities of Basle having commissioned several powerful men to dance with a girl, who had the dancing mania, till she recovered from her disorder. They successively relieved each other; and this singular mode of cure lasted above four weeks, when the patient fell down exhausted, and being quite unable to stand, was carried to an hospital, where she recovered. She had remained in her clothes all the time, and, entirely regardless of the pain of her lacerated feet, she had merely sat down occasionally to take some nourishment, or to slumber, during which the hopping movement of her body continued. *Felic. Plateri* Praxeos medicæ opus. L. I. ch. iii. p. 88. Tom. I. Basil, 1656. 4. Ejusd. Observationn. Basil, 1641. 8. p. 92.

ties, so that the more opulent employed confidential attendants to accompany them, and to take care that they did no harm either to themselves or others. This extraordinary disease was, however, so greatly mitigated in Schenck's time, that the St. Vitus's dancers had long since ceased to stroll from town to town; and that physician, like Paracelsus, makes no mention of the tympanitic inflation of the bowels. Moreover, most of those affected, were only annually visited by attacks; and the occasion of them was so manifestly referrible to the prevailing notions of that period, that if the unqualified belief in the supernatural agency of saints could have been abolished, they would not have had any return of the complaint. Throughout the whole of June, prior to the festival of St. John, patients felt a disquietude and restlessness which they were unable to overcome. They were dejected, timid, and anxious; wandered about in an unsettled state, being tormented with twitching pains, which seized them suddenly in different

parts, and eagerly expected the eve of St. John's day, in the confident hope, that by dancing at the altars of this saint, or of St. Vitus (for in the Breisgau aid was equally sought from both), they would be freed from all their sufferings. This hope was not disappointed; and they remained, for the rest of the year, exempt from any further attack, after having thus, by dancing and raving for three hours, satisfied an irresistible demand of nature. There were at that period two chapels in the Breisgau, visited by the St. Vitus's dancers; namely, the Chapel of St. Vitus at Biessen, near Breisach, and that of St. John, near Wasenweiler; and it is probable that in the south-west of Germany, the disease was still in existence in the seventeenth century.

However, it grew every year more rare, so that, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, it was observed only occasionally in its ancient form. Thus in the spring of the year 1623, G. Horst saw some women who annually performed a pilgrimage to

St. Vitus's chapel at Drefelhausen, near Weissenstein, in the territory of Ulm, that they might wait for their dancing fit there, in the same manner as those in the Breisgau did, according to Schenck's account. They were not satisfied, however, with a dance of three hours' duration, but continued day and night in a state of mental aberration, like persons in an ecstacy, until they fell exhausted to the ground; and when they came to themselves again, they felt relieved from a distressing uneasiness and painful sensation of weight in their bodies, of which they had complained for several weeks prior to St. Vitus's day [1].

After this commotion they remained well for the whole year; and such was their faith in the protecting power of the saint, that one of them had visited this shrine at Drefelhausen more than twenty times, and another had already kept the Saint's day for the thirty-second time at this sacred station.

[1] The 15th of June. Here therefore they did not wait till the Festival of St. John.

The dancing fit itself was excited here, as it probably was in other places, by music, from the effects of which, the patients were thrown into a state of convulsion[1]. Many concurrent testimonies serve to show that music generally contributed much to the continuance of the St. Vitus's dance, originated, and increased its paroxysms, and was sometimes the cause of their mitigation. So early as the fourteenth century, the swarms of St. John's dancers were accompanied by minstrels playing upon noisy instruments, who roused their morbid feelings; and it may readily be supposed that, by the performance of lively melodies, and the stimulating effects which the shrill tones of fifes and trumpets would produce, a paroxysm, that was perhaps but slight in itself, might, in many cases, be increased to the most outrageous fury, such as in later times,

[1] *Gregor. Horstii* Observationum medicinalium singularium. Libri IV. priores. His accessit Epistolarum et Consultationum medicar. Lib. I. Ulm. 1628. 4to. Epistol. p. 374.

was purposely induced in order that the force of the disease might be exhausted by the violence of its attack. Moreover by means of intoxicating music a kind of demoniacal festival for the rude multitude was established, which had the effect of spreading this unhappy malady wider and wider. Soft harmony was, however, employed to calm the excitement of those affected, and it is mentioned as a character of the tunes played with this view to the St. Vitus's dancers, that they contained transitions from a quick to a slow measure, and passed gradually from a high to a low key[1]. It is to be regretted that no trace of this music has reached our times, which is owing partly to the disastrous events of the seventeenth century, and partly to the circumstance that the disorder was looked upon as entirely national, and only incidentally considered worthy of notice by foreign men of learning.

[1] *Jo. Bodin.* Method. historic. Amstelod. 1650. 12mo. Ch. V. p. 99. Idem, de Republica. Francofurt. 1591. 8vo. Lib. V. Ch. I. p. 789.

If the St. Vitus's dance was already on the decline at the commencement of the seventeenth century, the subsequent events were altogether adverse to its continuance. Wars carried on with animosity and with various success for thirty years, shook the west of Europe; and although the unspeakable calamities which they brought upon Germany, both during their continuance, and in their immediate consequences, were by no means favourable to the advance of knowledge, yet, with the vehemence of a purifying fire, they gradually effected the intellectual regeneration of the Germans; superstition, in her ancient form, never again appeared, and the belief in the dominion of spirits, which prevailed in the middle ages, lost for ever its once formidable power.

II.—DANCING MANIA

IN

ITALY.

1.—Tarantism.

It was of the utmost advantage to the St. Vitus's dancers that they made choice of a favourite patron saint; for, not to mention that people were inclined to compare them to the possessed with evil spirits, described in the Bible, and thence to consider them as innocent victims to the power of Satan, the name of their great intercessor recommended them to general commiseration, and a magic boundary was thus set to every harsh feeling which might otherwise have proved hostile to their safety.

Other fanatics were not so fortunate, being often treated with the most relentless cruelty whenever the notions of the middle ages either excused or commanded it as a religious duty[1]. Thus, passing over the innumer-

[1] (Translator's note.) A very remarkable case, illustrative of this observation, where, however, not the person who was supposed to be the subject of the demoniacal malady, but its alleged authors, were punished, is thus reported by Dr. Watt, of Glasgow:—"It occurred at Bargarran, in Renfrewshire, in 1696. The patient's name was Christian Shaw, a girl of eleven years of age. She is described as having had violent fits of leaping, dancing, running, crying, fainting, &c., but the whole narrative is mixed up with so much credulity and superstition, that it is impossible to separate truth from fiction. These strange fits continued from August, 1696, till the end of March in the year following, when the patient recovered." An account of the whole was published at Edinburgh, in 1698, entitled, "A true Narrative of the Sufferings of a Young Girl, who was strangely molested by evil spirits, and their instruments, in the West, collected from authentic testimonies."

The whole being ascribed to witchcraft, the clergy were most active on the occasion. Besides occasional days of humiliation, two solemn fasts were observed throughout the whole bounds of the Presbytery, and a

able instances of the burning of witches, who were, after all, only labouring under a delu-

number of clergymen and elders were appointed in rotation, to be constantly on the spot. So far the matter was well enough. But such was the superstition of the age, that a memorial was presented to his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, and on the 19th of January, 1697, a warrant was issued, setting forth "that there were pregnant grounds of suspicion of witchcraft in Renfrewshire, especially from the afflicted and extraordinary condition of Christian Shaw, daughter of John Shaw, of Bargarran." A commission was therefore granted to Alexander Lord Blantyre, Sir John Maxwell, Sir John Shaw, and five others, together with the sheriff of the county, to inquire into the matter, and report. This commission is signed by eleven privy counsellors, consisting of some of the first noblemen and gentlemen in the kingdom.

The report of the commissioners having fully confirmed the suspicions respecting the existence of witchcraft, another warrant was issued on the 5th of April, 1697, to Lord Hallcraig, Sir John Houston, and four others, "to try the persons accused of witchcraft, and to sentence the guilty to be burned, or otherwise executed, to death, as the commission should incline."

The commissioners, thus empowered, were not remiss in the discharge of their duty. After twenty hours

sion, the Teutonic knights in Prussia not unfrequently condemned those maniacs to the stake who imagined themselves to be metamorphosed into wolves[1]—an extraordinary species of insanity, which having existed in Greece, before our era, spread, in process of time, over Europe, so that it was communicated not only to the Romaic, but also to the German and Sarmatian nations, and descended from the ancients, as a legacy of affliction to posterity. In modern times,

were spent in the examination of witnesses, and counsel heard on both sides, the counsel for the prosecution "exhorted the jury to beware of condemning the innocent: but at the same time, should they acquit the prisoners in opposition to legal evidence, they would be accessory to all the blasphemies, apostacies, murders, tortures, and seductions, whereof these enemies of heaven and earth should hereafter be guilty." After the jury had spent six hours in deliberation, seven of the miserable wretches, three men and four women, were condemned to the flames, and the sentence faithfully executed at Paisley, on the 10th of June, 1697.—*Medico-Chirurg. Trans.* Vol. V. p. 20. et seq.

[1] See *Olaus Magnus*, de gentibus septentrionalibus. Lib. XVIII. Ch. 45—47. p. 642. seq. Rom. 1555. fol.

Lycanthropy, such was the name given to this infatuation, has vanished from the earth, but it is nevertheless well worthy the consideration of the observer of human aberrations, and a history of it by some writer who is equally well acquainted with the middle ages as with antiquity is still a desideratum[1]. We leave it, for the present, without

[1] (Translator's note.) Burton, in his Anatomy of Melancholy, has the following observations, which, with the ample references by which they are accompanied, will furnish materials for such a history.

"*Lycanthropia*, which Avicenna calls *cucubuth*, others *lupinam insaniam*, or wolf-madness, when men run howling about graves and fields in the night, and will not be persuaded but that they are wolves, or some such beasts. Aëtius[1] and Paulus[2] call it a kind of *melancholy*; but I should rather refer it to *madness*, as most do. Some make a doubt of it, whether there be any such disease. Donat. ab Altomari[3] saith, that he saw two of them in his time: Wierus[4] tells a story of such a one at Padua, 1541, that would not believe to the contrary, but that he was a wolf. He hath another instance of a Spaniard,

[1] Lib. 6. cap. 11. [2] Lib. 3. cap. 16.
[3] Cap. 9. Art. Med. [4] De Præstig. Demonum, l. 3. cap. 21.

further notice, and turn to a malady most extraordinary in all its phenomena, having

who thought himself a bear. Forestus[1] confirms as much by many examples; one, among the rest, of which he was an eye-witness, at Alcmaer in Holland.—A poor husbandman that still hunted about graves, and kept in church-yards, of a pale, black, ugly, and fearful look. Such, belike, or little better, were king Prœtus' daughters[2], that thought themselves kine; and Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel, as some interpreters hold, was only troubled with this kind of madness. This disease, perhaps, gave occasion to that bold assertion of Pliny[3], *some men were turned into wolves in his time, and from wolves to men again;* and to that fable of Pausanius, of a man that was ten years a wolf, and afterwards turned to his former shape; to Ovid's[4] tale of Lycaon, &c. He that is desirous to hear of this disease, or more examples, let him read Austin in his eighteenth book, *de Civitate Dei*, cap. 5; *Mizaldus*, cent. 5. 77; *Sckenkius*, lib. 1. *Hildesheim, Spicil.* 2. *de manid*; Forestus, lib. 10. *de morbis cerebri; Olaus Magnus; Vicentius Bellavicensis, spec. met.* lib. 31. c. 122; *Pierius, Bodine, Zuinger,*

[1] Observat. lib. 10. de Morbis Cerebri, c. 15.

[2] Hippocrates lib. de insaniâ.

[3] Lib. 8. cap. 22. homines interdum lupos fieri, et contra.

[4] Met. lib. 1.

a close connection with the St. Vitus's dance, and, by a comparison of facts, which

Zeilgur, Peucer, Wierus, Spranger, &c. This malady, saith Avicenna, troubleth men most in February, and is now a-dayes frequent in Bohemia and Hungary, according to Heurnius[4]. Schernitzius will have it common in Livonia. They lye hid, most part, all day, and go abroad in the night, barking, howling, at graves and deserts; *they have usually hollow eyes, scabbed legs and thighs, very dry and pale*[5], saith Altomarus: he gives a reason there of all the symptomes, and sets down a brief cure of them."—*Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy.* Tenth Edit.: 8vo. 1804. Vol. I. Page 13. et seq.

It is surprising that so learned a writer as Burton should not have alluded to Oribasius who flourished 140 years before Aëtius, and of whom Freind says, "In auctore hoc miri cujusdam morbi prima mentio est; is Λυκάνθρωπος, sive Λυκανθρωπία dicitur, estque melancholiæ, aut insaniæ, species quænam ita ab illo descripta: 'Quos hoc malum infestos habet, nocturno tempore domo egressi, Lupos in omnibus rebus imitantur, et ad diem usque circa tumulos vagantur mortuorum. Hos ita cognosces: pallidi sunt, oculos hebetes et siccos, non

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[1] Cap. de Man

[2] Ulcerata crura; sitis ipsis adest immodica; pallidi; lingua sicca.

are altogether similar, affording us an instructive subject for contemplation. We allude to the disease called Tarantism, which made its first appearance in Apulia, and thence spread over the other provinces of Italy, where, during some centuries, it prevailed as a great epidemic. In the present times it has vanished, or at least has lost altogether its original importance, like the St. Vitus's dance, lycanthropy, and witchcraft.

illachrymantes, eosque concavos habent: lingua siccissima est, nulla penitus in ore saliva conspicitur, siti enecti; crura vero, quia noctu sæpe offendunt, sine remedio exulcerata.'—'Quod ad morbum ipsum attinet, si peregrinantibus fides adhibenda est, fuit olim in quibusdam regionibus, ut in Livonia, Hibernia, et aliis locis visi non infrequens, &c.'"—*J. Freind. Opera omnia Med.* fol. London. 1733.

De hujus morbi antiquitatibus vide elegantem Böttigeri disputationem in Sprengelii Beitr. z. Gesch. d. Med. 11. p. 1—45.—*Blancard. Lexic. Med.* Edit. noviss. 8vo. Lipsiæ. 1832.

2.—Most Ancient Traces.—Causes.

The learned Nicholas Perotti[1] gives the earliest account of this strange disorder. Nobody had the least doubt that it was caused by the bite of the *tarantula*[2][3], a

[1] Born 1430, † 1480. Cornucopiæ latinæ linguæ. Basil. 1536. fol. Comment. in primum *Martialis* Epigramma, p. 51, 52. "Est et alius stellio ex aranearum genere, qui, simili modo, ascalabotes a Græcis dicitur, et colotes et galeotes, lentiginosus in cavernulis dehiscentibus, per æstum terræ habitans. Hic majorum nostrorum temporibus in Italia visus non fuit, nunc frequens in Apulia visitur. Aliquando etiam in Tarquinensi et Corniculano agro, et vulgo similiter *tarantula* vocatur. Morsus ejus perraro interimit hominem, semistupidum tamen facit, et varie afficit, *tarantulam* vulgo appellant. *Quidam cantu, auditu, aut sono ita excitantur, ut pleni lætitia et semper ridentes saltant, nec nisi defatigati et semineces desistant.* Alii semper flentes, quasi desiderio suorum miserabilem vitam agant. Alii visa muliere, libidinis statim ardore incensi, veluti furentes in eam prosiliant. Quidam ridendo, quidam flendo moriantur."

[2] Lycosa Tarantula.

[3] (Translator's note.) The Aranea Tarantula of Linnæus, who, after the technical description, says, "Habitat in Europa australi, potissimum Apulia, in Barbaria, in

ground-spider common in Apulia; and the fear of this insect was so general, that its bite was in all probability much oftener imagined, or the sting of some other kind of insect mistaken for it, than actually received. The word *tarantula* is apparently the same as *terrantola*, a name given by the Italians to the stellio of the old Romans, which was a kind of lizard[1], said to be

Tauria, Russiæque australis desertis, in Astracania ad montes Sibiriæ Altaicos usque, in Persia et reliquo Oriente, in solo præsertim argillaceo in antris, morsu quamvis interdum dolente, olimque famosum tarantismum musica sanandum excitare credito, vix unquam periculoso, cinerascens, oculis duobus prioribus rubris, thorace in areas nigras diviso in centrum concurrentes, abdomine supra fasciis maxillisque nigris."—*Systema Naturæ*. Tom. I. pars v. p. 2956.

For particulars regarding the habits of the Lycosæ, see Griffith's Transl. of Cuvier's Animal Kingdom. Vol. XIII. p. 427 and p. 480. et seq. The author states that M. Chabrier has published (Soc. Acad. de Lille 4e cahier) some curious observations on the *Lycosa tarantula* of the south of France.

[1] *Matthiol.* Commentar. in Dioscorid. L. II. ch. 59. p. 363. Ed. Venet. 1565. fol.

poisonous, and invested by credulity with such extraordinary qualities, that, like the serpent of the Mosaic account of the Creation, it personified, in the imaginations of the vulgar, the notion of cunning, so that even the jurists designated a cunning fraud by the appellation of a "stellionatus"[1]. Perrotti expressly assures us that this reptile was called by the Romans *tarantula;* and since he himself, who was one of the most distinguished authors of his time, strangely confounds spiders and lizards together, so that he considers the Apulian tarantula, which he ranks among the class of spiders, to have the same meaning as the kind of lizard, called ἀσκαλαβώτης[2], it is the less extraordinary that the unlearned country-people of Apulia should confound the much dreaded ground-spider with the fabulous

[1] *Perotti.* Loc. cit.

[2] Probably Lacerta Gecko, as also the synonymes, κωλώτης and γαλεώτης quoted by him.

star-lizard[1], and appropriate to the one the name of the other. The derivation of the word tarantula, from the city of Tarentum, or the river Thara, in Apulia[2], on the banks of which this insect is said to have been most frequently found, or at least its bite to have had the most venomous effect, seems not to be supported by authority. So much for the name of this famous spider, which, unless we are greatly mistaken, throws no light whatever upon the nature of the disease in question. Naturalists, who, possessing a knowledge of the past, should not misapply their talents by employing them in establishing the dry distinction of forms, would find here much that calls for research, and their efforts would clear up many a perplexing obscurity.

Perotti states that the tarantula, that is,

[1] Lacerta Stellio. It need scarcely be observed that the venomous nature of this harmless creature was a pure invention of Roman superstition.

[2] See *Athan. Kircher.* Loc. cit.

the spider, so called, was not met with in Italy in former times, but that in his day it had become common, especially in Apulia, as well as in some other districts. He deserves, however, no great confidence as a naturalist, notwithstanding his having delivered lectures in Bologna on medicine and other sciences[1]. He at least has neglected to prove his assertion, which is not borne out by any analogous phenomenon observed in modern times with regard to the history of the spider species. It is by no means to be admitted that the tarantula did not make its appearance in Italy before the disease ascribed to its bite became remarkable, even though tempests more violent than those unexampled storms which arose at the time of the Black Death[2] in the middle of the fourteenth century had set the insect world in motion; for the spider is little, if at all, susceptible of those cosmical influences which at times multiply locusts and other

[1] From 1451—1458. *Tiraboschi.* Vl. 11. p. 356.

[2] Compare The Black Death. London, 1833. 12mo.

winged insects to a wonderful extent, and compel them to migrate.

The symptoms which Perotti enumerates as consequent on the bite of the tarantula agree very exactly with those described by later writers. Those who were bitten, generally fell into a state of melancholy, and appeared to be stupified, and scarcely in possession of their senses. This condition was, in many cases, united with so great a sensibility to music, that, at the very first tones of their favourite melodies, they sprang up, shouting for joy, and danced on without intermission, until they sunk to the ground exhausted and almost lifeless. In others, the disease did not take this cheerful turn. They wept constantly, and as if pining away with some unsatisfied desire, spent their days in the greatest misery and anxiety. Others, again, in morbid fits of love, cast their longing looks on women, and instances of death are recorded which are said to have oc-

curred under a paroxysm of either laughing or weeping.

From this description, incomplete as it is, we may easily gather that tarantism, the essential symptoms of which are mentioned in it, could not have originated in the fifteenth century, to which Perotti's account refers; for that author speaks of it as a well known malady, and states that the omission to notice it by older writers, was to be ascribed solely to the want of education in Apulia, the only province probably where the disease at that time prevailed. A nervous disorder that had arrived at so high a degree of development, must have been long in existence, and doubtless had required an elaborate preparation by the concurrence of general causes.

The symptoms which followed the bite of venomous spiders were well known to the ancients, and had excited the attention of their best observers, who agree in their descriptions of them. It is probable that

among the numerous species of their phalangium[1], the Apulian tarantula is included, but it is difficult to determine this point with certainty, more especially, because in Italy the tarantula was not the only insect which caused this nervous affection, similar results being likewise attributed to the bite of the scorpion. Lividity of the whole body as well as of the countenance, difficulty of speech, tremor of the limbs, icy coldness, pale urine, depression of spirits, head-ache, a flow of tears, nausea, vomiting, sexual excitement, flatulence, syncope, dysuria, watchfulness, lethargy, even death itself, were cited by them as the consequences of being bitten by venomous

[1] *Aëtius*, who wrote at the end of the sixteenth century, mentions six which occur in the older works. 1. ῥάγιον, 2. λίκος, 3. μυρμήκειον, 4. κρανοκολάπτης, by others, κεφαλοχρούστης, 5. σκληροκέφαλον, and 6. σκωλήκιον. Tetrabl. IV. Serm. I. ch. 18. in *Hen. Steph.* Compare *Dioscorid.* Lib. VI. ch. 42. *Matthiol.* Commentar. in Dioscorid. p. 1447. *Nicand.* Theriac. V. 8. 715. 755. 654.

spiders, and they made little distinction as to their kinds. To these symptoms we may add the strange rumour, repeated throughout the middle ages, that persons who were bitten, ejected by the bowels and kidneys, and even by vomiting, substances resembling a spider's web.

No where, however, do we find any mention made that those affected felt an irresistible propensity to dancing, or that they were accidentally cured by it. Even Constantine of Africa, who lived 500 years after Aëtius, and as the most learned physician of the school of Salerno, would certainly not have passed over so acceptable a subject of remark, knows nothing of such a memorable course of this disease arising from poison, and merely repeats the observations of his Greek predecessors [1].

[1] Aranearum multæ species sunt. Quæ ubi mordent, faciunt multum dolorem, ruborem, frigidum sudorem, et citrinum colorem. Aliquando quasi stranguriæ in urina duritiem, et virgæ extensionem, intra inguina, et genua, tetinositatem in stomacho. Linguæ exten-

Gariopontus[1], a Salernian physician of the eleventh century, was the first to describe a kind of insanity, the remote affinity of which to the tarantula disease is rendered apparent by a very striking symptom. The patients in their sudden attacks behaved like maniacs, sprang up, throwing their arms about with wild movements, and, if perchance a sword was at hand, they wounded themselves and others, so that it became necessary carefully to secure them. They imagined that they heard voices, and various kinds of sounds, and if during this state of illusion, the tones of a favourite instrument happened to catch

sionem, ut eorum sermo non possit discerni. *Vomunt humiditatem quasi araneæ telam*, et ventris emollitionem similiter, etc. De communibus medico cognitu necessariis locis. Lib. VIII. cap. 22. p. 235. Basil. 1539. fol.

[1] He lived in the middle of the eleventh century, and was a junior contemporary with *Constantine* of Africa. *J. Chr. Gottl. Ackermann*, Regimen sanitatis Salerni sive Scholæ Salernitanæ de conservanda bona valetudine præcepta. Stendal. 1790. 8vo. p. 38.

their ear, they commenced a spasmodic dance, or ran with the utmost energy which they could muster until they were totally exhausted. These dangerous maniacs, who, it would seem, appeared in considerable numbers, were looked upon as a legion of devils, but on the causes of their malady this obscure writer adds nothing further than that he believes, (oddly enough) that it may sometimes be excited by the bite of a mad dog. He calls the disease Anteneasmus, by which is meant no doubt the Enthusiasmus of the Greek physicians[1].

[1] The passage is as follows: "Anteneasmon est species maniæ periculosa nimium. Irritantur tanquam maniaci, et in se manus injiciunt. Hi subito arripiuntur, *cum saltatione manuum et pedum, quia intra aurium cavernas quasi voces diversas sonare falso audiunt, ut sunt diversorum instrumentorum musicæ soni; quibus delectantur, ut statim saltent*, aut cursum velocem arripiant; subito arripientes gladium percutiunt se aut alios: morsibus se et alios attrectare non dubitant. Hos Latini percussores, alii dicunt dæmonis legiones esse, ut dum eos arripiunt, vexent et vulnerent. Diligentia eis imponenda est, quando istos sonos audierint, includantur, et

We cite this phenomenon as an important forerunner of tarantism, under the conviction that we have thus added to the evidence that the development of this latter must have been founded on circumstances which existed from the twelfth to the end of the fourteenth century; for the origin of tarantism itself is referrible, with the utmost probability, to a period between the middle and the end of this century, and is consequently contemporaneous with that of the St. Vitus's dance (1374.). The influence of the Roman Catholic religion, connected as this was in the middle ages, with the pomp of processions, with public exercises of penance, and with innumerable practices which strongly excited the ima-

post accessionis horas phlebotomentur, et venter eis moveatur. Cibos leves accipiant cum calida aqua, ut omnis ventositas, quæ in cerebro sonum facit, egeratur. In ipsa accessione silentium habeant. Quod si spumam per os ejecerint, *vel ex canis rabidi morsu causa fuerit*, intra septem dies moriuntur." *Garioponti*, medici vetustissimi, de morborum causis, accidentibus et curationibus. Libri VIII. Basil. 1536. 8vo. L. I. ch. 2. p. 27.

ginations of its votaries, certainly brought the mind to a very favourable state for the reception of a nervous disorder. Accordingly, so long as the doctrines of Christianity were blended with so much mysticism, these unhallowed disorders prevailed to an important extent, and even in our own days we find them propagated with the greatest facility where the existence of superstition produces the same effect in more limited districts, as it once did among whole nations. But this is not all. Every country in Europe, and Italy, perhaps more than any other, was visited during the middle ages by frightful plagues, which followed each other in such quick succession, that they gave the exhausted people scarcely any time for recovery. The oriental bubo-plague ravaged Italy[1] sixteen times between the years 1119 and 1340.

[1] *J. P. Papon.* De la peste, ou les époques mémorables de ce fléau. Paris. an. 8. 8vo. Tome II. page 270. (1119. 1126. 1135. 1193. 1225. 1227. 1231. 1234. 1243. 1254. 1288. 1301. 1311. 1316. 1335. 1340.)

Small-pox and measles were still more destructive than in modern times, and recurred as frequently. St. Anthony's fire was the dread of town and country, and that disgusting disease, the leprosy, which, in consequence of the crusades, spread its insinuating poison in all directions, snatched from the paternal hearth innumerable victims who, banished from human society, pined away in lonely huts, whither they were accompanied only by the pity of the benevolent and their own despair. All these calamities, of which the moderns have scarcely retained any recollection, were heightened to an incredible degree by the Black Death[1], which spread boundless devastation and misery over Italy. Men's minds were every where morbidly sensitive; and as it happens with individuals whose senses, when they are suffering under anxiety, become more irritable, so that trifles are magnified into objects of great alarm, and slight shocks, which

[1] 1347 to 1350.

would scarcely affect the spirits when in health, give rise in them to severe diseases, so it was with this whole nation, at all times so alive to emotions, and at that period so sorely pressed with the horrors of death.

The bite of venomous spiders, or rather the unreasonable fear of its consequences, excited at such a juncture, though it could not have done so at an earlier period, a violent nervous disorder, which, like St. Vitus's dance in Germany, spread by sympathy, increasing in severity as it took a wider range, and still further extending its ravages from its long continuance. Thus, from the middle of the fourteenth century, the furies of *the Dance* brandished their scourge over afflicted mortals; and music, for which the inhabitants of Italy, then probably for the first time, manifested susceptibility and talent, became capable of exciting ecstatic attacks in those affected, and then furnished the magical means of exorcising their melancholy.

2.—Increase.

At the close of the fifteenth century we find that Tarantism had spread beyond the boundaries of Apulia, and that the fear of being bitten by venomous spiders had increased. Nothing short of death itself was expected from the wound which these insects inflicted, and if those who were bitten escaped with their lives, they were said to be seen pining away in a desponding state of lassitude. Many became weak-sighted or hard of hearing, some lost the power of speech, and all were insensible to ordinary causes of excitement. Nothing but the flute or the cithern afforded them relief [1]. At their sounds they awoke as it were by enchantment, opened their eyes, and moving slowly at first, according to the measure of the

[1] *Athanasius Kircher* gives a full account of the instruments then in use, which differed very slightly from those of our days. Musurgia universalis, sive Ars magna consoni et dissoni. Romæ, 1650, fol. Tom. I. p. 477.

music, were, as the time quickened, gradually hurried on to the most passionate dance. It was generally observable that country people, who were rude, and ignorant of music, evinced on these occasions an unusual degree of grace, as if they had been well practised in elegant movements of the body; for it is a peculiarity in nervous disorders of this kind, that the organs of motion are in an altered condition, and are completely under the control of the overstrained spirits. Cities and villages alike resounded throughout the summer season with the notes of fifes, clarinets, and Turkish drums; and patients were every where to be met with who looked to dancing as their only remedy. Alexander ab Alexandro[1], who gives this

[1] Genialium dierum Libri VI. Lugdun. Bat. 1673. 8vo. Lib. II. ch. 17. p. 398. *Alex. ab Alexandro*, a distinguished Neapolitan lawyer, lived from 1461 to 1523. The historian *Gaudentius Merula*, who became celebrated about 1536, makes only a very slight mention of the Tarantism. Memorabilium *Gaud. Merulæ* Novariensis opus, &c. Lugdun. 1656. 8vo. L. III. ch. 69. p. 251.

account, saw a young man in a remote village who was seized with a violent attack of Tarantism. He listened with eagerness and a fixed stare to the sound of a drum, and his graceful movements gradually became more and more violent until his dancing was converted into a succession of frantic leaps, which required the utmost exertion of his whole strength. In the midst of this over-strained exertion of mind and body the music suddenly ceased, and he immediately fell powerless to the ground, where he lay senseless and motionless until its magical effect again aroused him to a renewal of his impassioned performances.

At the period of which we are treating there was a general conviction, that by music and dancing the poison of the Tarantula was distributed over the whole body, and expelled through the skin, but that if there remained the slightest vestige of it in the vessels, this became a permanent germ of the disorder, so that the dancing fits might again and again be excited *ad infinitum* by

music. This belief, which resembled the delusion of those insane persons who, being by artful management freed from the imagined causes of their sufferings, are but for a short time released from their false notions, was not entertained without the most injurious effects: for in consequence of it those affected necessarily became by degrees convinced of the incurable nature of their disorder. They expected relief indeed, but not a cure, from music; and when the heat of summer awakened a recollection of the dances of the preceding year, they, like the St. Vitus's dancers of the same period before St. Vitus's day, again grew dejected and misanthropic, until, by music and dancing, they dispelled the melancholy which had become with them a kind of sensual enjoyment.

Under such favourable circumstances it is clear that Tarantism must every year have made further progress. The number of those affected by it increased beyond all belief, for whoever had either actually been, or even

fancied that he had been, once bitten by a poisonous spider or scorpion, made his appearance annually wherever the merry notes of the Tarantella resounded. Inquisitive females joined the throng and caught the disease, not indeed from the poison of the spider, but from the mental poison which they eagerly received through the eye ; and thus the cure of the *Tarantati* gradually became established as a regular festival of the populace, which was anticipated with impatient delight.

Without attributing more to deception and fraud than to the peculiar nature of a progressive mental malady, it may readily be conceived that the cases of this strange disorder now grew more frequent. The celebrated Matthioli [1], who is worthy of entire confidence, gives his account as an eye witness. He saw the same extraordinary effects produced by music as Alexandro, for, how-

[1] *Petr. Andr. Matthioli* Commentarii in Dioscorid. Venet. 1565, fol. Lib. II. ch. 57. p. 362.

ever tortured with pain, however hopeless of relief the patients appeared, as they lay stretched on the couch of sickness, at the very first sounds of those melodies which made an impression on them—but this was the case only with the Tarantellas composed expressly for the purpose—they sprung up as if inspired with new life and spirit, and, unmindful of their disorder, began to move in measured gestures, dancing for hours together without fatigue, until, covered with a kindly perspiration, they felt a salutary degree of lassitude, which relieved them for a time at least, perhaps even for a whole year, from their dejection and oppressive feeling of general indisposition. Alexandro's experience of the injurious effects resulting from a sudden cessation of the music was generally confirmed by Matthioli. If the clarinets and drums ceased for a single moment, which, as the most skilful players were tired out by the patients, could not but happen occasionally, they suffered their limbs to fall listless, again sunk exhausted to the ground, and

could find no solace but in a renewal of the dance. On this account care was taken to continue the music until exhaustion was produced; for it was better to pay a few extra musicians, who might relieve each other, than to permit the patient, in the midst of this curative exercise, to relapse into so deplorable a state of suffering. The attack consequent upon the bite of the Tarantula, Matthioli describes as varying much in its manner. Some became morbidly exhilarated, so that they remained for a long while without sleep, laughing, dancing, and singing in a state of the greatest excitement. Others, on the contrary, were drowsy. The generality felt nausea and suffered from vomiting, and some had constant tremors. Complete mania was no uncommon occurrence, not to mention the usual dejection of spirits and other subordinate symptoms.

3.—Idiosyncracies.—Music.

Unaccountable emotions, strange desires, and morbid sensual irritations of all kinds,

were as prevalent as in the St. Vitus's dance, and similar great nervous maladies. So late as the sixteenth century patients were seen armed with glittering swords which, during the attack, they brandished with wild gestures, as if they were going to engage in a fencing match [1]. Even women scorned all female delicacy [2], and adopting this impassioned demeanour did the same; and this phenomenon, as well as the excitement which the Tarantula dancers felt at the sight of any thing with metallic lustre, was quite common up to the period when, in modern times, the disease disappeared [3].

The abhorrence of certain colours and the agreeable sensations produced by others, were

[1] *Athanas. Kircher.* Magnes sive de Arte magnetica Opus. Rom. 1654. fol. p. 589.

[2] *Joann. Juvenis* de antiquitate et varia Tarentinorum fortuna Lib. VIII. Neapol. 1589. fol. Lib. II. ch. 17. p. 107. With the exception of the statement quoted, *Juvenis* has borrowed almost every thing from *Matthioli.*

[3] *Simon. Aloys. Tudecius,* physician to Queen Christine, saw a case of this kind in July, 1656. *Bonet.* Medicina septentrionalis collatit. Genev. 1684. fol.

much more marked among the excitable Italians than was the case in the St. Vitus's dance with the more phlegmatic Germans. Red colours, which the St. Vitus's dancers detested, they generally liked, so that a patient was seldom seen who did not carry a red handkerchief for his gratification, or greedily feast his eyes on any articles of red clothing worn by the by-standers. Some preferred yellow, others black colours, of which an explanation was sought, according to the prevailing notions of the times, in the difference of temperaments [1]. Others again were enraptured with green; and eye witnesses describe this rage for colours as so extraordinary, that they can scarcely find

[1] *Epiphan. Ferdinand.* Centum historiæ seu observationes et casus medici. Venet. 1621. fol. Hist. LXXXI. p. 259. *Ferdinando,* a physician in Messapia at the commencement of the seventeenth century, has collected, with much diligence, the various statements respecting the Tarantism of his time. He "*was himself an eye witness of it,*" (p. 265.) and is by far the most copious of all the old writers on this subject.

words with which to express their astonishment. No sooner did the patients obtain a sight of the favourite colour than, new as the impression was, they rushed like infuriated animals towards the object, devoured it with their eager looks, kissed and caressed it in every possible way, and gradually resigning themselves to softer sensations, adopted the languishing expression of enamoured lovers, and embraced the handkerchief, or whatever other article it might be, which was presented to them, with the most intense ardour, while the tears streamed from their eyes as if they were completely overwhelmed by the inebriating impression on their senses.

The dancing fits of a certain Capuchin friar in Tarentum excited so much curiosity, that Cardinal Cajetano proceeded to the monastery, that he might see with his own eyes what was going on. As soon as the monk, who was in the midst of his dance, perceived the spiritual prince clothed in his red garments, he no longer listened to the

Tarantella of the musicians, but with strange gestures endeavoured to approach the Cardinal, as if he wished to count the very threads of his purple robe, and to allay his intense longing by its odour. The interference of the spectators, and his own respect, prevented his touching it, and thus the irritation of his senses not being appeased, he fell into a state of such anguish and disquietude, that he presently sunk down in a swoon, from which he did not recover until the Cardinal compassionately gave him his purple cape. This he immediately seized in the greatest ecstasy, and pressed now to his breast, now to his forehead and cheeks, and then again commenced his dance as if in the frenzy of a love fit [1].

At the sight of colours which they disliked, patients flew into the most violent rage, and, like the St. Vitus's dancers when they saw red objects, could scarcely be restrained from tearing the clothes of those spectators

[1] *Kircher.* Loc. cit. pp. 588, 589.

who raised in them such disagreeable sensations [1].

Another no less extraordinary symptom was the ardent longing for the sea which the patients evinced. As the St. John's dancers of the fourteenth century saw, in the spirit, the heavens open and display all the splendour of the saints, so did those who were suffering under the bite of the Tarantula feel themselves attracted to the boundless expanse of the blue ocean, and lost themselves in its contemplation. Some songs, which are still preserved, marked this peculiar longing, which was moreover expressed by significant music, and was excited even by the bare mention of the sea [2].

[1] *Ferdinand*, 259.

[2] For example:

"Allu mari mi portati
Se voleti che mi sanati.
Allu mari, alla via:
Cosi m'ama la donna mia.
Allu mari allu mari:
Mentre campo, t'aggio amari."

Kircher. Loc. cit. p. 592.—Appendix, No. V.

Some, in whom this inexplicable susceptibility was carried to the greatest pitch, cast themselves with blind fury into the blue waves [1], as the St. Vitus's dancers occasionally did into rapid rivers. This condition, so opposite to the frightful state of hydrophobia, betrayed itself in others only in the pleasure afforded them by the sight of clear water in glasses. These they bore in their hands while dancing, exhibiting at the same time strange movements, and giving way to the most extravagant expressions of their feelings. They were delighted also when, in the midst of the space allotted for this exercise, more ample vessels, filled with water, and surrounded by rushes and water plants, were placed, in which they bathed their heads and arms with evident pleasure [2]. Others there were who rolled about on the ground, and were, by their own desire, buried up to the neck in the earth, in order

[1] *Ferdinand.* Loc. cit. p. 257.

[2] *Kircher*, p. 589.

to alleviate the misery of their condition, not to mention an endless variety of other symptoms which showed the perverted action of the nerves.

All these modes of relief, however, were as nothing in comparison with the irresistible charms of musical sound. Attempts had indeed been made in ancient times to mitigate the pain of sciatica[1], or the paroxysms of mania[2], by the soft melody of the flute, and, what is still more applicable to the present purpose, to remove the danger arising from the bite of vipers[3] by the same means. This, however, was tried only to a very small extent. But after being bitten by the Tarantula, there was, according to popular opinion, no way of saving life except by music, and it was hardly considered as an exception to the general rule, that every

[1] *Plin.* Hist. Nat. Lib. XXVIII. ch. 2. p. 447. Ed. *Hard.*

[2] *Cael. Aurelian.* Chron. Lib. I. ch. 5. p. 335. Ed. *Amman.*

[3] *Democritus* and *Theophrastus* made mention of it. See *Gell.* Noct. Attic. Lib. IV. ch. 13.

now and then the bad effects of a wound were prevented by placing a ligature on the bitten limb, or by internal medicine, or that strong persons occasionally withstood the effects of the poison, without the employment of any remedies at all [1]. It was much more common, and is quite in accordance with the nature of so exquisite a nervous disease, to hear accounts of many who, when bitten by the Tarantula, perished miserably because the Tarantella, which would have afforded them deliverance, was not played to them [2]. It was customary therefore, so early as the commencement of the seventeenth century, for whole bands of musicians to traverse Italy during the summer months, and, what is quite unexampled either in ancient or modern times, the cure of the *Tarantati* in the different towns and villages

[1] *Ferdinand*, p. 260.

[2] *Bagliv.* Loc. cit. p. 618. From more decided statements, however, we learn, that of those who had been bitten only one or two in a thousand died. *Ferdinand.* p. 255.

was undertaken on a grand scale. This season of dancing and music was called "the women's little carnival[1]," for it was women more especially who conducted the arrangements; so that throughout the whole country they saved up their spare money, for the purpose of rewarding the welcome musicians, and many of them neglected their household employments to participate in this festival of the sick. Mention is even made of one benevolent lady (Mita Lupa) who had expended her whole fortune on this object[2].

The music itself was of a kind perfectly adapted to the nature of the malady, and it made so deep an impression on the Italians, that even to the present time, long since the extinction of the disorder, they have retained the Tarantella, as a particular species of music employed for quick lively dancing. The different kinds of Tarantella were distinguished, very significantly, by particu-

[1] Il carnevaletto delle donne. *Baglivi*. p. 617.

[2] *Ferdinand*. p. 254. 260.

lar names, which had reference to the moods observed in the patients. Whence it appears that they aimed at representing by these tunes, even the idiosyncracies of the mind as expressed in the countenance. Thus there was one kind of Tarantella which was called " Panno rosso," a very lively impassioned style of music, to which wild dithyrambic songs were adapted; another, called " Panno verde," which was suited to the milder excitement of the senses, caused by green colours, and set to Idyllian songs of verdant fields and shady groves. A third was named " Cinque tempi;" a fourth " Moresca," which was played to a Moorish dance; a fifth, " Catena?" and a sixth, with a very appropriate designation, " Spallata," as if it was only fit to be played to dancers who were lame in the shoulder. This was the slowest and least in vogue of all [1]. For those who loved water they took

[1] *Ferdinand.* p. 259. Slow music made the Tarantel dancers feel as if they were crushed: spezzati, minuzzati, p. 260.

care to select love songs, which were sung to corresponding music, and such persons delighted in hearing of gushing springs and rushing cascades and streams [1]. It is to be regretted that on this subject we are unable to give any further information, for only small fragments of songs, and a very few Tarantellas, have been preserved which belong to a period so remote as the beginning of the seventeenth, or at furthest the end of the sixteenth century [2].

The music was almost wholly in the Turkish style (aria Turchesca), and the ancient songs of the peasantry of Apulia, which increased in number annually, were well suited to the abrupt and lively notes of the Turkish drum and the shepherd's pipe. These two instruments were the favourites in the country, but others of all kinds were played in towns and villages, as an accompaniment to the dances of the patients and the songs of the spectators. If any particular melody

[1] *A. Kircher.* Loc. cit. [2] See Appendix, No. V.

was disliked by those affected, they indicated their displeasure by violent gestures expressive of aversion. They could not endure false notes, and it is remarkable that uneducated boors, who had never in their lives manifested any perception of the enchanting power of harmony, acquired, in this respect, an extremely refined sense of hearing, as if they had been initiated into the profoundest secrets of the musical art[1]. It was a matter of every day's experience, that patients showed a predilection for certain Tarantellas, in preference to others, which gave rise to the composition of a great variety of these dances. They were likewise very capricious in their partialities for particular instruments; so that some longed for the shrill notes of the trumpet, others for the softest music produced by the vibration of strings[2].

Tarantism was at its greatest height in Italy in the seventeenth century, long after

[1] *Bagliv.* Loc. cit. p. 623.
[2] *A. Kircher.* Loc. cit.

the St. Vitus's dance of Germany had disappeared. It was not the natives of the country only who were attacked by this complaint. Foreigners of every colour and of every race, negroes, gipsies, Spaniards, Albanians, were in like manner affected by it[1]. Against the effects produced by the Tarantula's bite, or by the sight of the sufferers, neither youth nor age afforded any protection; so that even old men of ninety threw aside their crutches at the sound of the Tarantella, and, as if some magic potion, restorative of youth and vigour, were flowing through their veins, joined the most extravagant dancers[2]. Ferdinando saw a boy five years old seized with the dancing mania[3], in consequence of the bite of a tarantula, and, what is almost past belief, were it not supported by the testimony of so credible an eye-witness, even deaf people were not ex-

[1] *Ferdinand.* p. 262.

[2] This is said of an old man of Avetrano, who was ninety-four years of age. p. 254. 257.

[3] Idem. p. 261.

empt from this disorder, so potent in its effect was the very sight of those affected, even without the exhilarating emotions caused by music [1].

Subordinate nervous attacks were much more frequent during this century than at any former period, and an extraordinary icy coldness was observed in those who were the subjects of them; so that they did not recover their natural heat until they had engaged in violent dancing [2]. Their anguish and sense of oppression forced from them a cold perspiration; the secretion from the kidneys was pale [3], and they had so great a dislike to every thing cold, that when water was offered them they pushed it away with abhorrence. Wine, on the contrary, they all drank willingly, without being heated by

[1] *Ferdinando* saw a man who was hard of hearing listen with great eagerness during the dance, and endeavour to approach the drums and fifes as nearly as possible. P. 258.

[2] Idem. p. 260.

[3] Idem. p. 256.

it, or in the slightest degree intoxicated [1]. During the whole period of the attack they suffered from spasms in the stomach, and felt a disinclination to take food of any kind. They used to abstain some time before the expected seizures from meat and from snails, which they thought rendered them more severe [2], and their great thirst for wine may therefore, in some measure, be attributable to the want of a more nutritious diet; yet the disorder of the nerves was evidently its chief cause, and the loss of appetite, as well as the necessity for support by wine, were its effects. Loss of voice, occasional blindness [3], vertigo, complete insanity, with sleeplessness, frequent weeping without any ostensible cause, were all usual symptoms. Many patients found relief from being placed in swings or rocked in cradles [4], others required to be roused from their state of suffering by severe blows on the soles of their feet, others

[1] *Ferdinando*, p. 260.
[2] Idem. p. 261.
[3] Idem. p. 256.
[4] Idem. p. 258.

beat themselves, without any intention of making a display, but solely for the purpose of allaying the intense nervous irritation which they felt, and a considerable number were seen with their bellies swollen[1], like those of the St. John's dancers, while the violence of the intestinal disorder was indicated in others by obstinate constipation or diarrhœa and vomiting[2]. These pitiable objects gradually lost their strength and their colour, and creeping about with injected eyes, jaundiced complexions, and inflated bowels, soon fell into a state of profound melancholy, which found food and solace in the solemn tolling of the funeral bell, and in an abode among the tombs of cemeteries, as is related of the Lycanthropes of former times.

The persuasion of the inevitable consequences of being bitten by the Tarantula, exercised a dominion over men's minds which even the healthiest and strongest could not

[1] *Ferdinando*, p. 257. [2] Idem, p. 256.

shake off. So late as the middle of the sixteenth century, the celebrated Fracastoro found the robust bailiff of his landed estate groaning, and, with the aspect of a person in the extremity of despair, suffering the very agonies of death, from a sting in the neck, inflicted by an insect which was believed to be a Tarantula. He kindly administered, without delay, a potion of vinegar and Armenian bole, the great remedy of those days for the plague, and all kinds of animal poisons, and the dying man was, as if by a miracle, restored to life and the power of speech [1]. Now, since it is quite out of the question that the bole could have any thing to do with the result in this case, notwithstanding Fracastoro's belief in its virtues, we can only account for the cure by supposing, that a confidence in so great a physician prevailed over this fatal disease of the imagination, which would otherwise have yielded to

[1] De Contag. Lib. III. ch. 2. p. 212. Opera Lugdun. 1591. 8vo.

scarcely any other remedy except the Tarantella. Ferdinando was acquainted with women who, for thirty years in succession, had overcome the attacks of this disorder by a renewal of their annual dance—so long did they maintain their belief in the yet undestroyed poison of the Tarantula's bite, and so long did that mental affection continue to exist, after it had ceased to depend on any corporeal excitement[1].

Wherever we turn we find that this morbid state of mind prevailed, and was so supported by the opinions of the age, that it needed only a stimulus in the bite of the Tarantula, and the supposed certainty of its very disastrous consequences, to originate this violent nervous disorder. Even in Ferdinando's time there were many who altogether denied the poisonous effects of the Tarantula's bite, whilst they considered the disorder, which annually set Italy in commotion, to be a melancholy depending on

[1] De Contag. p. 254.

the imagination[1]. They dearly expiated this scepticism, however, when they were led, with an inconsiderate hardihood, to test their opinions by experiment; for many of them became the subjects of severe Tarantism, and even a distinguished prelate, Jo. Baptist Quinzato, Bishop of Foligno, having allowed himself, by way of a joke, to be bitten by a Tarantula, could obtain a cure in no other way than by being, through the influence of the Tarantella, compelled to dance[2]. Others among the clergy, who wished to shut their ears against music, because they considered dancing derogatory to their station, fell into a dangerous state of illness by thus delaying the crisis of the malady, and were obliged at last to save themselves from a miserable death by submitting to the unwelcome but sole means of cure[3]. Thus it appears that the age was so little favourable to freedom of thought, that

[1] De Contag. p. 254. [2] Idem, p. 262.
[3] Idem, p. 261.

even the most decided sceptics, incapable of guarding themselves against the recollection of what had been presented to the eye, were subdued by a poison, the effects of which they had ridiculed, and which was in itself inert in its effect.

4.—Hysteria.

Different characteristics of morbidly excited vitality having been rendered prominent by Tarantism in different individuals, it could not but happen that other derangements of the nerves would assume the form of this, whenever circumstances favoured such a transition. This was more especially the case with hysteria, that proteiform and mutable disorder, in which the imaginations, the superstitions and the follies of all ages have been evidently reflected. The "Carnevaletto delle Donne" appeared most opportunely for those who were hysterical. Their disease received from it, as it had at other times from other extraordinary customs, a peculiar direction; so that whether

bitten by the Tarantula or not, they felt compelled to participate in the dances of those affected, and to make their appearance at this popular festival, where they had an opportunity of triumphantly exhibiting their sufferings. Let us here pause to consider the kind of life which the women in Italy led. Lonely, and deprived by cruel custom of social intercourse, that fairest of all enjoyments, they dragged on a miserable existence. Cheerfulness and an inclination to sensual pleasures passed into compulsory idleness, and, in many, into black despondency[1]. Their imaginations became disor-

[1] (Translator's note.) "The imaginations of women are always more excitable than those of men, and they are therefore susceptible of every folly when they lead a life of strict seclusion, and their thoughts are constantly turned inwards upon themselves. Hence in orphan asylums, hospitals, and convents, the nervous disorder of one female so easily and quickly becomes the disorder of all. I have read in a good medical work that a nun, in a very large convent in France, began to mew like a cat; shortly afterwards other nuns also mewed. At last all the nuns mewed together every day at a certain time for

dered—a pallid countenance and oppressed respiration bore testimony to their profound sufferings. How could they do otherwise, sunk as they were in such extreme misery,

several hours together. The whole surrounding Christian neighbourhood heard, with equal chagrin and astonishment, this daily cat-concert, which did not cease until all the nuns were informed that a company of soldiers were placed by the police before the entrance of the convent, and that they were provided with rods, and would continue whipping them until they promised not to mew any more.

" But of all the epidemics of females which I myself have seen in Germany, or of which the history is known to me, the most remarkable is the celebrated Convent-epidemic of the fifteenth century, which Cardan describes, and which peculiarly proves what I would here enforce. A nun in a German nunnery fell to biting all her companions. In the course of a short time all the nuns of this convent began biting each other. The news of this infatuation among the nuns soon spread, and it now passed from convent to convent throughout a great part of Germany, principally Saxony and Brandenburg. It afterwards visited the nunneries of Holland, and at last the nuns had the biting mania even as far as Rome."—*Zimmermann on Solitude*, Vol. II. Leipsig. 1784.

than seize the occasion to burst forth from their prisons, and alleviate their miseries by taking part in the delights of music. Nor should we here pass unnoticed a circumstance which illustrates, in a remarkable degree, the psychological nature of hysterical sufferings, namely, that many chlorotic females, by joining the dancers at the Carnevaletto, were freed from their spasms and oppression of breathing for the whole year, although the corporeal cause of their malady was not removed [1]. After such a result, no one could call their self-deception a mere imposture, and unconditionally condemn it as such.

This numerous class of patients certainly contributed not a little to the maintenance of the evil, for their fantastic sufferings, in which dissimulation and reality could scarcely be distinguished even by themselves, much less by their physicians, were imitated, in the same way as the distortions of the

[1] *Georg. Baglivi*, Diss. de Anatome, morsu et effectibus Tarantulæ. pp. 616, 617. Opp. Lugdun. 1710. 4to.

St. Vitus' dancers, by the impostors of that period. It was certainly by these persons also that the number of subordinate symptoms was increased to an endless extent, as may be conceived from the daily observation of hysterical patients, who, from a morbid desire to render themselves remarkable, deviate from the laws of moral propriety. Powerful sexual excitement had often the most decided influence over their condition. Many of them exposed themselves in the most indecent manner, tore their hair out by the roots, with howling and gnashing of their teeth; and when, as was sometimes the case, their unsatisfied passion hurried them on to a state of frenzy, they closed their existence by self-destruction; it being common at that time for these unfortunate beings to precipitate themselves into the wells [1].

It might hence seem that, owing to the conduct of patients of this description, so

[1] *Ferdinando*, p. 257.

much of fraud and falsehood would be mixed up with the original disorder, that having passed into another complaint, it must have been itself destroyed. This, however, did not happen in the first half of the seventeenth century: for as a clear proof that Tarantism remained substantially the same and quite unaffected by Hysteria, there were in many places, and in particular at Messapia, fewer women affected than men, who in their turn were, in no small proportion, led into temptation by sexual excitement[1]. In other places, as for example at Brindisi, the case was reversed, which may, as in other complaints, be in some measure attributable to local causes. Upon the whole it appears from concurrent accounts that women by no means enjoyed the distinction of being attacked by Tarantism more frequently than men.

It is said that the cicatrix of the tarantula bite, on the yearly or half yearly return of

[1] *Ferdinando*, pp. 256, 257, 258.

the fit, became discoloured[1], but on this point the distinct testimony of good observers is wanting to deprive the assertion of its utter improbability.

It is not out of place to remark here, that about the same time that Tarantism attained its greatest height in Italy, the bite of venomous spiders was more feared in distant parts of Asia likewise, than it had ever been within the memory of man. There was this difference, however, that the symptoms supervening on the occurrence of this accident were not accompanied by the Apulian nervous disorder which, as has been shown in the foregoing pages, had its origin rather in the melancholic temperament of the inhabitants of the south of Italy, than in the nature of the tarantula poison itself. This poison is therefore doubtless to be considered only as a remote cause of the complaint, which, but for that temperament, would be inadequate to its production. The Persians employed a very rough means of

[1] *Ferdinando*, p. 258.

counteracting the bad consequences of a poison of this sort. They drenched the wounded person with milk, and then, by violent rotatory motion in a suspended box, compelled him to vomit [1].

5.—Decrease.

The Dancing Mania, arising from the tarantula bite, continued, with all those additions of self-deception, and of the dissimulation which is such a constant attendant on nervous disorders of this kind, through the whole course of the seventeenth century. It was indeed gradually on the decline, but up to the termination of this period, showed such extraordinary symptoms, that Baglivi, one of the best physicians of that time, thought he did a service to science by making them the subject of a dissertation [2].

[1] *Adam Olearius.* Vermehrte Moscowitische und Persianische Reisebeschreibung. Travels in Muscovy and Persia. Schleswig, 1663. fol. Book IV. p. 496.

[2] *Georg. Baglivi,* Dissertatio VI. de Anatome, morsu et effectibus Tarantulæ (written in 1595). Opera omnia, Lugdun. 1710. 4to. p. 599.

He repeats all the observations of Ferdinando, and supports his own assertions by the experience of his father, a physician at Lecce, whose testimony, as an eye-witness, may be admitted as unexceptionable[1].

The immediate consequences of the Tarantula bite, the supervening nervous disorder, and the aberrations and fits of those who suffered from Hysteria, he describes in a masterly style, nor does he ever suffer his credulity to diminish the authenticity of his account, of which he has been unjustly accused by later writers.

Finally, Tarantism has declined more and more in modern times, and is now limited to single cases. How could it possibly have maintained itself unchanged in the eighteenth century, when all the links which connected

[1] This physician once saw three patients, who were evidently suffering from a malignant fever, and whose illness was attributed by the by-standers to the bite of the Tarantula, who were forced to dance by having music played to them. One of them died on the spot, and the two others very shortly after. Ch. 7. p. 616.

it with the middle ages had long since been snapped asunder? Imposture[1] grew more

[1] (Translator's note.) Among the instances in which imposture successfully taxes popular credulity, perhaps there is none more remarkable at the present day than that afforded by the Psylli of Egypt, a country which furnishes another illustration of our author's remark at the commencement of the next chapter. This sect, according to the testimony of modern writers, continues to exhibit the same strange spectacles as the ancient serpent-eaters of Cyrene, described by Strabo, 17 Dio. 51. c. 14. Lucan, 9. v. 894. 937. Herodot. 4. c. 173. Paus. 9. c. 28. Savary states that he witnessed a procession at Rosetta, where a band of these seeming madmen, with bare arms and wild demeanour, held enormous serpents in their hands, which writhed round their bodies and endeavoured to make their escape. These Psylli, grasping them by the neck, tore them with their teeth and ate them up alive, the blood streaming down from their polluted mouths. Others of the Psylli were striving to wrest their prey from them, so that it seemed a struggle among them who should devour a serpent. The populace followed them with amazement, and believed their performance to be miraculous. Accordingly they pass for persons inspired, and possessed by a spirit who destroys the effect of the serpent.

Sonnini, though not so fortunate as to witness a public

frequent, and wherever the disease still appeared in its genuine form, its chief cause,

exhibition of such performances, yet gives the following interesting account of what he justly calls a remarkable specimen of the extravagance of man. After adverting to the superstitious origin of the sect, he goes on to say that a Saadi, or serpent-eater, came to his apartment accompanied by a priest of his sect. The priest carried in his bosom a large serpent of a dusky green and copper colour, which he was continually handling; and after having recited a prayer, he delivered it to the Saadi. The narrative proceeds:—" With a vigorous hand the Saadi seized the serpent, which twisted itself round his naked arm. He began to appear agitated; his countenance was discomposed; his eyes rolled; he uttered terrible cries, bit the animal in the head, and tore off a morsel, which we saw him chew and swallow. On this his agitation became convulsive; his howlings were redoubled, his limbs writhed, his countenance assumed the features of madness, and his mouth, extended by terrible grimaces, was all in a foam. Every now and then he devoured a fresh morsel of the reptile. Three men endeavoured to hold him, but he dragged them all three round the chamber. His arms were thrown about with violence on all sides, and struck every thing within their reach. Eager to avoid him, M. Forneti and I were obliged sometimes to cling to the wall, to let him pass

namely, a peculiar cast of melancholy, which formerly had been the temperament of thousands, was now possessed only occasionally by unfortunate individuals. It might therefore not unreasonably be maintained, that the Tarantism of modern times bears nearly the same relation to the original malady, as the St. Vitus's dance which still exists, and certainly has all along existed, bears, in cer-

and escape his blows. We could have wished the madman far away. At length the priest took the serpent from him, but his madness and convulsions did not cease immediately; he bit his hands, and his fury continued. The priest then grasped him in his arms, passed his hand gently down his back, lifted him from the ground, and recited some prayers. By degrees his agitation diminished, and subsided into a state of complete lassitude, in which he remained a few moments.

"The Turks who were present at this ridiculous and disgusting ceremony were firmly persuaded of the reality of this religious fury; and it is very certain that, whether it were reality or imposture, it is impossible to see the transports of rage and madness exhibited in a more striking manner, or have before your eyes a man more calculated to inspire terror."—*Hunter's Translation of Sonnini's Travels*, 8vo. 1799.

tain cases, to the original dancing mania of the dancers of St. John.

To conclude. Tarantism, as a real disease, has been denied *in toto*, and stigmatized as an imposition, by most physicians and naturalists, who in this controversy have shown the narrowness of their views and their utter ignorance of history. In order to support their opinion they have instituted some experiments, apparently favourable to it, but under circumstances altogether inapplicable, since, for the most part, they selected, as the subjects of them, none but healthy men, who were totally uninfluenced by a belief in this once so dreaded disease. From individual instances of fraud and dissimulation, such as are found in connection with most nervous affections, without rendering their reality a matter of any doubt, they drew a too hasty conclusion respecting the general phenomenon, of which they appeared not to know, that it had continued for nearly four hundred years, having originated in the remotest periods of the middle

ages. The most learned and the most acute among these sceptics is Sarao the Neapolitan [1]. His reasonings amount to this, that he considers the disease to be a very marked form of melancholy, and compares the effect of the tarantula bite upon it to stimulating, with spurs, a horse which is already running. The reality of that effect he thus admits, and therefore directly confirms what in appearance only he denies [2]. By shaking the already vacillating belief in this disorder he is said to have actually succeeded in rendering it less frequent, and in setting bounds to imposture [3]; but this no more disproves the reality of its existence, than the oft-repeated detection of imposition has been able, in modern times, to banish magnetic sleep from the circle of natural phenomena, though such detection has, on its side, ren-

[1] *Franc. Serao*, della Tarantola o vero Falangio di Puglia. Napol. 1742.—See *Thom. Fasani*, De vita, muniis et scriptis *Franc. Serai*, &c. Commentarius. Neapol. 1784. 8vo. p. 76. et seq.

[2] Idem. p. 88. [3] Idem. p. 89.

dered more rare the incontestible effects of animal magnetism. Other physicians and naturalists[1] have delivered their sentiments

[1] *H. Mercurialis*, de Venenis et Morbis Venenosis. Venet. 1601. 4to. Lib. II. ch. 6. p. 39. repeats the silly tale that, those who were bitten continued, during their paroxysm, to be occupied with whatever they had been engaged in at the time they received the bite, and proves, by a fact which had been communicated to him, that already, in the sixteenth century, they were able to distinguish impostors from those who had been really bitten. *H. Cardani*, de Subtilitate, Lib. XXI. Basil, 1560. 8vo. Lib. IX. p. 635. The baneful effect of the venom of the Tarantula was obviated, not so much by music as by the great exertion used in dancing. Compare *J. Cæs. Scaliger*, Exoteric. Exercitt. Lib. XV. de Subtilitate. Francof. 1612. 8vo. Ex. 185. p. 610.—*J. M. Fehr*, Anchora sacra vel Scorzonera. Jen. 1666. 8vo. p. 127. From *Alexander ab Alexandro*, and several later writers.—*Stalpart van der Wiel*, Observatt. rarior. Lugdun. Bat. 1687. 8vo. Cent. 1. Obs. C. p. 424. According to *Kircher*.—*Rod. a. Castro*, Medicus politicus. Hamburg, 1614. 4to. Lib. IV. ch. 16. p. 275. according to *Matthioli*.—*D. Cirillo*, Some account of the Tarantula, Philosoph. Trans. Vol. LX. 1770. describes Tarantism as a common imposture. So also does *J. A. Unzer*, The Physician, Vol. II. pp. 473. 640.

on Tarantism, but as they have not possessed an enlarged knowledge of its history,

vol. III. pp. 466. 526. 528, 529, 530. 533. 553; likewise *A. F. Büsching*, Eigene Gedanken und gesammelte Nachrichten von der Tarantel, welche zur gänzlichen Vertilgung des Vorurtheils von der Schädlichkeit ihres Bisses, und der Heilung desselben durch Musik, dienlich und hinlänglich sind. Observations and statements respecting the Tarantel, which suffice entirely to set aside the prejudice respecting the venom of its bite, as also its cure by music. Berlin, 1772. 8vo. A very shallow criticism.—*P. Forest.* Observatt. et Curatt. Medicinal. Lib. XXX. XXXI. et XXXII. Francof. 1509. fol. Ob. XII. p. 41. diligently compiled from his predecessors.—*Phil. Camerar.* Operæ horarum subcisivarum. Francof. 1658. 4to. Cent. II. cap. 81. p. 317.—*R. Mead*, a mechanical account of poisons: London, 1747. 8vo. p. 99. contends for the reality of Tarantism; with *R. Boyle*, an essay of the great effects of even languid and unheeded motion, &c. London, 1685. ch. VI.—So also *J. F. Cartheuser*, Fundamenta pathologiæ et therapiæ. Francof. a. V. 1758. 8vo. Tom. I. p. 334. *Th. Willis* de morbis convulsivis, cap. VII. p. 492. Opp. Lugdun. 1681. 4to. according to *Gassendi, Ferdinando, Kircher* and others.—**L. Valetta*, de Phalangio Apulo opusculum. Neapol. 1706.—*Thom. Cornelio* (professor at Naples in the middle of the seventeenth century).

their views do not merit particular exposition. It is sufficient for the comprehension of every one, that we have presented the facts freed from all extraneous speculation.

Letter to *J. Dodington* concerning some observations made of persons pretending to be stung by Tarantulas. Phil. Transactions, No. 83. p. 4066. 1672. considers Tarantism to be St. Vitus's dance.—*Jos. Lanzoni*, de Venenis, cap. 57. p. 140. Opp. Lausann. 1738. 4to. Tom. I. mostly from *Baglivi*.—*J. Schenk*, a *Grafenberg*. Observatt. Medicar. Lib. VII. Obs. 122. p. 792. Tom. II. Ed. Francof. 1600. 8vo. was himself an eye-witness. —**Wolfg. Senguerd*, Tractatus physicus de Tarantula. Lugd. Bat. 1668. 12mo.—**Herm. Grube*, De ictu Tarantulæ et vi musices in eius curatione conjecturæ physico-medicæ. Francof. 1679. 8vo.—*Athan. Kircher*, Musurgia universalis. Rom. 1650. fol. Tom. II. IX. ch. 4. p. 218.—*M. Köhler*, in den Svenska Vetenskaps. Academiens Handlungar. 1758. p. 29. Transactions of the Swedish Academy of Sciences.—Berlin Collection for the Furtherance of the Science of Medicine. Vol. V. No. 1. p. 53. 1772.—*Burserii* Institutiones medic. pract. tom. 3. p. 1. cap. 7. § 219. p. 159. ed. *Hecker*.—*J. S. Halle*, Gifthistorie, History of Poisons, Berlin, 1786. 8vo.—*Blumenbach*, Naturgeschichte, Natural history, p. 412.—*E. F. Leonhardt*, Diss. de Tarantismo, Berol, 1827. 8vo. and many others.

III.—DANCING MANIA

IN

ABYSSINIA.

1.—Tigretier.

Both the St. Vitus's dance and Tarantism belonged to the ages in which they appeared. They could not have existed under the same latitude at any other epoch, for at no other period were the circumstances which prepared the way for them combined in a similar relation to each other, and the mental as well as corporeal temperaments of nations, which depend on causes such as have been stated, are as little capable of renewal as the different stages of life in individuals.

This gives so much the more importance to a disease, but cursorily alluded to in the foregoing pages, which exists in Abyssinia, and which nearly resembles the original mania of the St. John's dancers, inasmuch as it exhibits a perfectly similar ecstacy, with the same violent effect on the nerves of motion. It occurs most frequently in the Tigrè country, being thence called Tigretier, and is probably the same malady which is called in the Æthiopian language Astarāgaza[1]. On this subject we will introduce the testimony of Nathaniel Pearce[2], an eye-witness, who

[1] This may, however, be considered merely as a conjecture, founded upon the following passage in *Ludolf's* Lexicon Æthiopic. Ed. 2da. Francof. 1699. fol. p. 142. *Astarāgaza*, de vexatione quadam diabolica accipitur. Marc. i. 26. ix. 18. Luc. ix. 39. Græus habet σπαράττειν, vellicare, discerpere. *Sed Æthiopes, teste Gregorio, pro morbo quodam accipiunt, quo quis perpetuo pedes agitare et quasi calcitrare cogitur.* Fortassis est Saltatio S. Viti, vulgo S. Veits Tanz.

[2] The life and adventures of *Nathaniel Pearce*, written by himself, during a residence in Abyssinia, from the years 1810 to 1819. London, 1831. 8vo. Vol. I. ch. ix. p. 290.

resided nine years in Abyssinia. " The Tigretier," says he, " is more common among the women than among the men. It seizes the body as if with a violent fever, and from that turns to a lingering sickness, which reduces the patients to skeletons, and often kills them, if the relations cannot procure the proper remedy. During this sickness their speech is changed to a kind of stuttering, which no one can understand but those afflicted with the same disorder. When the relations find the malady to be the real *tigretier*, they join together to defray the expenses of curing it; the first remedy they in general attempt, is to procure the assistance of a learned Dofter, who reads the Gospel of St. John [1], and drenches the patient with cold water daily for the space of seven days—an application that very often

[1] The Evangelist and *St. John* the Baptist have been at all times, and among all nations, confounded with each other, so that the relation of the latter to one and the same phenomenon in such different ages and climates is very probable.

proves fatal. The most effectual cure, though far more expensive than the former, is as follows :—The relations hire, for a certain sum of money, a band of trumpeters, drummers and fifers, and buy a quantity of liquor ; then all the young men and women of the place assemble at the patient's house, to perform the following most extraordinary ceremony.

" I was once called in by a neighbour to see his wife, a very young woman, who had the misfortune to be afflicted with this disorder ; and the man being an old acquaintance of mine, and always a close comrade in the camp, I went every day, when at home, to see her, but I could not be of any service to her, though she never refused my medicines. At this time, I could not understand a word she said, although she talked very freely, nor could any of her relations understand her. She could not bear the sight of a book or a priest, for at the sight of either, she struggled, and was apparently seized with acute agony, and a flood of tears, like

blood mingled with water, would pour down her face from her eyes. She had lain three months in this lingering state, living upon so little that it seemed not enough to keep a human body alive; at last, her husband agreed to employ the usual remedy, and, after preparing for the maintenance of the band, during the time it would take to effect the cure, he borrowed from all his neighbours their silver ornaments, and loaded her legs, arms, and neck with them.

"The evening that the band began to play, I seated myself close by her side as she lay upon the couch, and, about two minutes after the trumpets had begun to sound, I observed her shoulders begin to move, and soon afterwards her head and breast, and in less than a quarter of an hour, she sat upon her couch. The wild look she had, though sometimes she smiled, made me draw off to a greater distance, being almost alarmed to see one nearly a skeleton move with such strength; her head, neck, shoulders, hands and feet, all made a strong motion to the

sound of the music, and in this manner she went on by degrees, until she stood up on her legs upon the floor. Afterwards she began to dance, and at times to jump about, and at last, as the music and noise of the singers increased, she often sprang three feet from the ground. When the music slackened, she would appear quite out of temper, but when it became louder, she would smile and be delighted. During this exercise, she never showed the least symptom of being tired, though the musicians were thoroughly exhausted; and when they stopped to refresh themselves by drinking and resting a little, she would discover signs of discontent.

" Next day, according to the custom in the cure of this disorder, she was taken into the market-place, where several jars of *maize* or *tsug* were set in order by the relations, to give drink to the musicians and dancers. When the crowd had assembled and the music was ready, she was brought forth and began to dance and throw herself into the

maddest postures imaginable, and in this manner she kept on the whole day. Towards evening, she began to let fall her silver ornaments from her neck, arms, and legs, one at a time, so that, in the course of three hours, she was stripped of every article. A relation continually kept going after her as she danced, to pick up the ornaments, and afterwards delivered them to the owners from whom they were borrowed. As the sun went down, she made a start with such swiftness, that the fastest runner could not come up with her, and, when at the distance of about two hundred yards, she dropped on a sudden, as if shot. Soon afterwards, a young man, on coming up with her, fired a matchlock over her body, and struck her upon the back with the broad side of his large knife, and asked her name, to which she answered as when in her common senses, a sure proof of her being cured; for, during the time of this malady, those afflicted with it never answer to their Christian names. She was now taken up in a very weak con-

dition and carried home, and a priest came and baptized her again in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which ceremony concluded her cure. Some are taken in this manner to the market-place for many days before they can be cured, and it sometimes happens that they cannot be cured at all. I have seen them in these fits dance with a *bruly*, or bottle of maize, upon their heads, without spilling the liquor, or letting the bottle fall, although they have put themselves into the most extravagant postures.

" I could not have ventured to write this from hearsay, nor could I conceive it possible, until I was obliged to put this remedy in practice upon my own wife[1], who was seized with the same disorder, and then I was compelled to have a still nearer view of this strange disorder. I at first thought that a whip would be of some service, and one day attempted a few strokes, when unnoticed by any person, we being by ourselves, and

[1] She was a native Greek.

I having a strong suspicion that this ailment sprang from the weak minds of women, who were encouraged in it for the sake of the grandeur, rich dress, and music which accompany the cure. But how much was I surprised, the moment I struck a light blow, thinking to do good, to find that she became like a corpse, and even the joints of her fingers became so stiff that I could not straighten them; indeed, I really thought that she was dead, and immediately made it known to the people in the house that she had fainted, but did not tell them the cause, upon which they immediately brought music, which I had for many days denied them, and which soon revived her; and I then left the house to her relations to cure her at my expense, in the manner I have before mentioned, though it took a much longer time to cure my wife than the woman I have just given an account of. One day I went privately, with a companion, to see my wife dance, and kept at a short distance, as I was ashamed to go near the crowd. On

looking stedfastly upon her, while dancing or jumping, more like a deer than a human being, I said that it certainly was not my wife; at which my companion burst into a fit of laughter, from which he could scarcely refrain all the way home. Men are sometimes afflicted with this dreadful disorder, but not frequently. Among the Amhara and Galla it is not so common."

Such is the account of Pearce, who is every way worthy of credit, and whose lively description renders the traditions of former times respecting the St. Vitus's dance and Tarantism intelligible, even to those who are sceptical respecting the existence of a morbid state of the mind and body of the kind described, because, in the present advanced state of civilization among the nations of Europe, opportunities for its development no longer occur. The credibility of this energetic, but by no means ambitious man, is not liable to the slightest suspicion, for, owing to his want of education, he had no knowledge of the phenomena in question,

and his work evinces throughout his attractive and unpretending impartiality.

Comparison is the mother of observation, and may here elucidate one phenomenon by another—the past by that which still exists. Oppression, insecurity, and the influence of a very rude priestcraft, are the powerful causes which operated on the Germans and Italians of the middle ages, as they now continue to operate on the Abyssinians of the present day. However these people may differ from us in their descent, their manners, and their customs, the effects of the above-mentioned causes are the same in Africa as they were in Europe, for they operate on man himself, independently of the particular locality in which he may be planted; and the condition of the Abyssinians of modern times is, in regard to superstition, a mirror of the condition of the European nations in the middle ages. Should this appear a bold assertion, it will be strengthened by the fact, that in Abyssinia two examples of superstitions occur, which

are completely in accordance with occurrences of the middle ages that took place contemporarily with the dancing mania. *The Abyssinians have their Christian flagellants, and there exists among them a belief in a Zoomorphism, which presents a lively image of the Lycanthropy of the middle ages.* Their flagellants are called Zackarys. They are united into a separate Christian fraternity, and make their processions through the towns and villages with great noise and tumult, scourging themselves till they draw blood and wounding themselves with knives[1]. They boast that they are descendants of St. George. It is precisely in Tigrè, the country of the Abyssinian dancing mania, where they are found in the greatest numbers, and where they have, in the neighbourhood of Axum, a church of their own, dedicated to their patron saint, *Oun Arvel.* Here there is

[1] Idem. p. 289. Compare "The Black Death," by the Author. London, 1833. 12mo. p. 86.—*E. G. Förstemann,* Die christlichen Geisslergesellschaften. The Christian Societies of Flagellants. Halle, 1828. 8vo.

an ever-burning lamp, and they contrive to impress a belief that this is kept alight by supernatural means. They also here keep a holy water, which is said to be a cure for those who are affected by the dancing mania.

The Abyssinian Zoomorphism is a no less important phenomenon, and shows itself in a manner quite peculiar. The blacksmiths and potters form, among the Abyssinians, a society or caste called in Tigrè *Tebbib*, and in Amhara *Buda*, which is held in some degree of contempt, and excluded from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, because it is believed that they can change themselves into hyænas and other beasts of prey, on which account they are feared by every body, and regarded with horror. They artfully contrive to keep up this superstition, because by this separation they preserve a monopoly of their lucrative trades, and as in other respects they are good Christians, (but few Jews or Mahomedans live among them) they seem to attach no great consequence to their excommunication. As a

badge of distinction, they wear a golden earring, which is frequently found in the ears of hyænas that are killed, without its having ever been discovered how they catch these animals, so as to decorate them with this strange ornament, and this removes, in the minds of the people, all doubt as to the supernatural powers of the smiths and potters[1]. To the Budas is also ascribed the gift of enchantment, especially that of the influence of the evil eye[2]. They nevertheless live unmolested, and are not condemned to the flames by fanatical priests, as the Lycanthropes were in the middle ages.

[1] *Pearce.* Loc. cit.

[2] Among the ancient Greeks *βασκήσις*. This superstition is more or less developed among all the nations of the earth, and has not yet entirely disappeared from Europe.

IV.—SYMPATHY.

Imitation—compassion—sympathy, these are imperfect designations for a common bond of union among human beings—for an instinct which connects individuals with the general body, which embraces with equal force, reason and folly, good and evil, and diminishes the praise of virtue as well as the criminality of vice. In this impulse there are degrees, but no essential differences, from the first intellectual efforts of the infant mind, which are in a great measure based on imitation, to that morbid condition of the soul in which the sensible impression of a nervous malady fetters the mind, and finds its way, through the eye, directly to the diseased texture, as the electric shock is propagated by contact from body to body. To

this instinct of imitation, when it exists in its highest degree, is united a loss of all power over the will, which occurs as soon as the impression on the senses has become firmly established, producing a condition like that of small animals when they are fascinated by the look of a serpent. By this mental bondage, morbid sympathy is clearly and definitely distinguished from all subordinate degrees of this instinct, however closely allied the imitation of a disorder may seem to be to that of a mere folly, an absurd fashion, an awkward habit in speech and manner, or even of a confusion of ideas. Even these latter imitations, however, directed as they are to foolish and pernicious objects, place the self-independence of the greater portion of mankind in a very doubtful light, and account for their union into a social whole. Still more nearly allied to morbid sympathy than the imitation of enticing folly, although often with a considerable admixture of the latter, is the diffusion of violent excitements, especially those of a religious or political character, which have so

powerfully agitated the nations of ancient and modern times, and which may, after an incipient compliance[1], pass into a total loss of power over the will, and an actual disease of the mind. Far from us be the attempt to awaken all the various tones of this chord, whose vibrations reveal the profound secrets which lie hid in the inmost recesses of the soul. We might well want powers adequate to so vast an undertaking. Our business here is only with that morbid sympathy, by the aid of which the dancing mania of the middle ages grew into a real epidemic. In order to make this apparent by comparison, it may not be out of place, at the close of this enquiry, to introduce a few striking examples:—

1. "At a cotton manufactory at Hodden Bridge, in Lancashire, a girl, on the 15th of February, put a mouse into the breast of another girl, who had a great dread of mice. The girl was immediately thrown into a fit, and continued in it, with the most violent

[1] *Paracelsus.*

convulsions, for twenty-four hours. On the following day, three more girls were seized in the same manner; and on the 17th, six more. By this time, the alarm was so great, that the whole work, in which 200 or 300 were employed, was totally stopped, and an idea prevailed that a particular disease had been introduced by a bag of cotton opened in the house. On Sunday the 18th, Dr. St. Clare was sent for from Preston; before he arrived three more were seized, and during that night and the morning of the 19th, eleven more, making in all twenty-four. Of these, twenty-one were young women, two were girls of about ten years of age, and one man, who had been much fatigued with hold ing the girls. Three of the number lived about two miles from the place where the disorder first broke out, and three at another factory at Clitheroe, about five miles distant, which last and two more were infected entirely from report, not having seen the other patients, but like them and the rest of the country, strongly impressed with the idea of the plague being caught from the cotton.

The symptoms were anxiety, strangulation, and very strong convulsions; and these were so violent as to last without any intermission from a quarter of an hour to twenty-four hours, and to require four or five persons to prevent the patients from tearing their hair and dashing their heads against the floor or walls. Dr. St. Clare had taken with him a portable electrical machine, and by electric shocks the patients were universally relieved without exception. As soon as the patients and the country were assured that the complaint was merely nervous, easily cured, and not introduced by the cotton, no fresh person was affected. To dissipate their apprehensions still further, the best effects were obtained by causing them to take a cheerful glass and join in a dance. On Tuesday the 20th, they danced, and the next day were all at work, except two or three, who were much weakened by their fits[1]."

[1] Gentleman's Magazine, 1787, March, p. 268.—*F. B. Osiander*, Ueber die Entwickelungskrankheiten in den Blüthenjahren des weiblichen Geschlechts. On the

The occurrence here described is remarkable on this account, that there was no important predisposing cause for convulsions in these young women, unless we consider as such their miserable and confined life in the work-rooms of a spinning manufactory. It did not arise from enthusiasm, nor is it stated that the patients had been the subjects of any other nervous disorders. In another perfectly analogous case, those attacked were all suffering from nervous complaints, which roused a morbid sympathy in them at the sight of a person seized with convulsions. This, together with the supervention of hysterical fits, may aptly enough be compared to Tarantism.

2. " A young woman of the lowest order, twenty-one years of age, and of a strong frame, came on the 13th of January, 1801, to visit a patient in the Charité hospital at Berlin, where she had herself been previously under treatment for an inflammation of the chest with tetanic spasms, and imme-

disorders of young women, &c. Tübingen, 1820, Vol. I. p. 10.

diately on entering the ward, fell down in strong convulsions. At the sight of her violent contortions, six other female patients immediately became affected in the same way, and by degrees eight more were in like manner attacked with strong convulsions. All these patients were from sixteen to twenty-five years of age, and suffered without exception, one from spasms in the stomach, another from palsy, a third from lethargy, a fourth from fits with consciousness, a fifth from catalepsy, a sixth from syncope, &c. The convulsions, which alternated in various ways with tonic spasms, were accompanied by loss of sensibility, and were invariably preceded by languor with heavy sleep, which was followed by the fits in the course of a minute or two; and it is remarkable, that in all these patients their former nervous disorders, not excepting paralysis, disappeared, returning, however, after the subsequent removal of their new complaint. The treatment, during the course of which, two of the nurses, who were young women, suffered similar attacks, was con-

tinued for four months. It was finally successful, and consisted principally in the administration of opium, at that time the favourite remedy [1].

Now, every species of enthusiasm, every strong affection, every violent passion, may lead to convulsions, to mental disorders—to a concussion of the nerves, from the sensorium to the very finest extremities of the spinal cord. The whole world is full of examples of this afflicting state of turmoil, which, when the mind is carried away by the force of a sensual impression which destroys its freedom, is irresistibly propagated by imitation. Those who are thus infected do not spare even their own lives, but, as a hunted flock of sheep will follow their leader and rush over a precipice, so will whole hosts of enthusiasts, deluded by their infatuation, hurry on to a self-inflicted death. Such has ever been the case, from

[1] This account is given by *Fritze*. *Hufeland's* Journal der practischen Heilkunde, Vol. XII. 1801. Part I. p. 110. Hufeland's Journal of Practical Medicine.

the days of the Milesian virgins to the modern associations for self-destruction [1]. Of all enthusiastic infatuations, however, that of religion is the most fertile in disorders of the mind as well as of the body, and both spread with the greatest facility by sympathy. The history of the church furnishes innumerable proofs of this, but we need go no further than the most recent times.

3. In a Methodist chapel at Redruth, a man during divine service cried out with a loud voice, "What shall I do to be saved?" at the same time manifesting the greatest uneasiness and solicitude respecting the condition of his soul. Some other members of the congregation, following his example, cried out in the same form of words, and seemed shortly after to suffer the most excruciating bodily pain. This strange occurrence was soon publicly known,

[1] Compare *J. G. Zimmermann*, Ueber die Einsamkeit. Leipsig, 1784. 8vo. Vol. II. ch. 6. p. 77. On Solitude.—*J. P. Falret*, De l'hypochondrie et du suicide. Paris, 1822. 8vo. and others.

and hundreds of people, who had come thither, either attracted by curiosity, or a desire, from other motives, to see the sufferers, fell into the same state. The chapel remained open for some days and nights, and from that point the new disorder spread itself, with the rapidity of lightning, over the neighbouring towns of Camborne, Helston, Truro, Penryn, and Falmouth, as well as over the villages in the vicinity. Whilst thus advancing, it decreased in some measure at the place where it had first appeared, and it confined itself throughout to the Methodist chapels. It was only by the words which have been mentioned that it was excited, and it seized none but people of the lowest education. Those who were attacked betrayed the greatest anguish, and fell into convulsions; others cried out, like persons possessed, that the Almighty would straightway pour out his wrath upon them, that the wailings of tormented spirits rang in their ears, and that they saw hell open to receive them. The clergy, when in the course of

their sermons, they perceived that persons were thus seized, earnestly exhorted them to confess their sins, and zealously endeavoured to convince them that they were by nature enemies to Christ; that the anger of God had therefore fallen upon them; and that if death should surprise them in the midst of their sins, the eternal torments of hell would be their portion. The over-excited congregation upon this repeated their words, which naturally must have increased the fury of their convulsive attacks. When the discourse had produced its full effect, the preacher changed his subject, reminded those who were suffering, of the power of the Saviour, as well as of the grace of God, and represented to them in glowing colours the joys of heaven. Upon this, a remarkable reaction sooner or later took place. Those who were in convulsions felt themselves raised from the lowest depths of misery and despair to the most exalted bliss, and triumphantly shouted out that their bonds were loosed, their sins were forgiven, and that

they were translated to the wonderful freedom of the children of God. In the meantime, their convulsions continued, and they remained during this condition so abstracted from every earthly thought, that they staid two and sometimes three days and nights together in the chapels, agitated all the time by spasmodic movements, and taking neither repose nor nourishment. According to a moderate computation, 4000 people were, within a very short time, affected with this convulsive malady.

The course and symptoms of the attacks were in general as follows :—There came on at first a feeling of faintness, with rigor and a sense of weight at the pit of the stomach, soon after which, the patient cried out, as if in the agonies of death or the pains of labour. The convulsions then began, first showing themselves in the muscles of the eyelids, though the eyes themselves were fixed and staring. The most frightful contortions of the countenance followed, and the convulsions now took their course downwards, so that the

muscles of the neck and trunk were affected, causing a sobbing respiration, which was performed with great effort. Tremors and agitation followed, and the patients screamed out violently, and tossed their heads about from side to side. As the complaint increased, it seized the arms, and its victims beat their breasts, clasped their hands, and made all sorts of strange gestures. The observer who gives this account remarked that the lower extremities were in no instance affected. In some cases, exhaustion came on in a very few minutes, but the attack usually lasted much longer, and there were even cases in which it was known to continue for sixty or seventy hours. Many of those who happened to be seated when the attack commenced, bent their bodies rapidly backwards and forwards during its continuance, making a corresponding motion with their arms, like persons sawing wood. Others shouted aloud, leaped about, and threw their bodies into every possible posture, until they had exhausted their

strength. Yawning took place at the commencement in all cases, but as the violence of the disorder increased, the circulation and respiration became accelerated, so that the countenance assumed a swollen and puffed appearance. When exhaustion came on, patients usually fainted, and remained in a stiff and motionless state until their recovery. The disorder completely resembled the St. Vitus's dance, but the fits sometimes went on to an extraordinarily violent extent, so that the author of the account once saw a woman, who was seized with these convulsions, resist the endeavours of four or five strong men to restrain her. Those patients who did not lose their consciousness were in general made more furious by every attempt to quiet them by force, on which account they were in general suffered to continue unmolested until nature herself brought on exhaustion. Those affected complained, more or less, of debility after the attacks, and cases sometimes occurred in which they passed into other disorders : thus

some fell into a state of melancholy, which, however, in consequence of their religious ecstacy, was distinguished by the absence of fear and despair; and in one patient inflammation of the brain is said to have taken place. No sex or age was exempt from this epidemic malady. Children five years old and octogenarians were alike affected by it, and even men of the most powerful frame were subject to its influence. Girls and young women, however, were its most frequent victims [1].

4. For the last hundred years a nervous affection of a perfectly similar kind has existed in the Shetland Islands, which furnishes a striking example, perhaps the only one now existing, of the very lasting propagation by sympathy of this species of disorders. The origin of the malady was very insignificant. An epileptic woman had a fit in church, and whether it was that the

[1] This statement is made by *J. Cornish*. See *Fothergill's* and *Want's* Medical and Physical Journal, vol. xxxi. 1814. p. 373—379.

minds of the congregation were excited by devotion, or that, being overcome at the sight of the strong convulsions, their sympathy was called forth, certain it is, that many adult women, and even children, some of whom were of the male sex, and not more than six years old, began to complain forthwith of palpitation, followed by faintness, which passed into a motionless and apparently cataleptic condition. These symptoms lasted more than an hour, and probably recurred frequently. In the course of time, however, this malady is said to have undergone a modification, such as it exhibits at the present day. Women whom it has attacked will suddenly fall down, toss their arms about, writhe their bodies into various shapes, move their heads suddenly from side to side, and with eyes fixed and staring, utter the most dismal cries. If the fit occurs on any occasion of public diversion, they will, as soon as it has ceased, mix with their companions and continue their amusement as if nothing had happened. Paroxysms of this kind

used to prevail most during the warm months of summer, and about fifty years ago there was scarcely a Sabbath in which they did not occur. Strong passions of the mind, induced by religious enthusiasm, are also exciting causes of these fits, but like all such false tokens of divine workings, they are easily encountered by producing in the patient a different frame of mind, and especially by exciting a sense of shame: thus those affected are under the control of any sensible preacher, who knows how to "administer to a mind diseased," and to expose the folly of voluntarily yielding to a sympathy so easily resisted, or of inviting such attacks by affectation. An intelligent and pious minister of Shetland informed the physician, who gives an account of this disorder as an eye-witness, that being considerably annoyed, on his first introduction into the country, by these paroxysms, whereby the devotions of the church were much impeded, he obviated their repetition by assuring his parishioners, that no treatment was more effectual than im-

mersion in cold water; and as his kirk was fortunately contiguous to a fresh-water lake, he gave notice that attendants should be at hand, during divine service, to ensure the proper means of cure. The sequel need scarcely be told. The fear of being carried out of the church, and into the water, acted like a charm; not a single Naiad was made, and the worthy minister, for many years, had reason to boast of one of the best regulated congregations in Shetland. As the physician above alluded to was attending divine service in the kirk of Baliasta, on the Isle of Unst, a female shriek, the indication of a convulsion fit, was heard; the minister, Mr. Ingram, of Fetlar, very properly stopped his discourse, until the disturber was removed; and, after advising all those who thought they might be similarly affected, to leave the church, he gave out, in the meantime, a psalm. The congregation was thus preserved from further interruption; yet the effect of sympathy was not prevented, for as the narrator of the account was leaving

the church, he saw several females writhing and tossing about their arms on the green grass, who durst not, for fear of a censure from the pulpit, exhibit themselves after this manner within the sacred walls of the kirk[1].

In the production of this disorder, which no doubt still exists, fanaticism certainly had a smaller share than the irritable state of women out of health, who only needed excitement, no matter of what kind, to throw them into the prevailing nervous paroxysms. When, however, that powerful cause of nervous disorders takes the lead, we find far more remarkable symptoms developed, and it then depends on the mental condition of the people among whom they appear, whether, in their spread, they shall take a narrow or an extended range — whether confined to some small knot of zealots they are to vanish without a trace, or whether they are to attain even historical importance.

[1] *Samuel Hibbert*, Description of the Shetland Islands, comprising an account of their geology, scenery, antiquities, and superstitions. Edinburgh, 1822. 4to. p. 399.

5. The appearance of the *Convulsionaires* in France, whose inhabitants, from the greater mobility of their blood, have in general been the less liable to fanaticism, is, in this respect, instructive and worthy of attention. In the year 1727 there died, in the capital of that country, the Deacon Pâris, a zealous opposer of the Ultramontanists, division having arisen in the French church on account of the bull " Unigenitus." People made frequent visits to his tomb, in the cemetery of St. Medard, and four years afterwards (in September, 1731,) a rumour was spread, that miracles took place there. Patients were seized with convulsions and tetanic spasms, rolled upon the ground like persons possessed, were thrown into violent contortions of their heads and limbs, and suffered the greatest oppression, accompanied by quickness and irregularity of pulse. This novel occurrence excited the greatest sensation all over Paris, and an immense concourse of people resorted daily to the above named

cemetery, in order to see so wonderful a spectacle, which the Ultramontanists immediately interpreted as a work of Satan, while their opponents ascribed it to a divine influence. The disorder soon increased, until it produced magnetic sleep (*Schlafwachen*) in nervous women, a phenomenon till then unknown; for one female especially attracted attention, who blindfold, and, as it was believed, by means of the sense of smell, read every writing that was placed before her, and distinguished the characters of unknown persons. The very earth taken from the grave of the Deacon, was soon thought to possess miraculous power. It was sent to numerous sick persons at a distance, whereby they were said to have been cured, and thus this nervous disorder spread far beyond the limits of the capital, so that at one time it was computed that there were more than eight hundred decided *Convulsionaires*, who would hardly have increased so much in numbers, had not Louis XV. directed that the cemetery

should be closed[1]. The disorder itself assumed various forms, and increased, by its attacks, the general excitement. Many persons, besides suffering from the convulsions, became the subjects of violent pain, which required the assistance of their brethren of the faith. On this account they, as well as those who afforded them aid, were called by the common title of *Secourists*. The modes of relief adopted were, in general, very rough, and they were remarkably in accordance with those which were administered to the St. John's dancers and the Tarantati; for the sufferers were beaten and goaded in various parts of the body with stones, hammers, swords, clubs, &c., of which the defenders of this extraordinary sect relate the most astonishing examples, in proof that severe pain is imperatively demanded by nature in this disorder, as an effectual counter-

[1] About this time the following couplet was circulated:—

"De par le Roi, défense à Dieu
De faire miracle dans ce lieu."

irritant. The Secourists used wooden clubs, in the same manner as paviours use their mallets, and it is stated that some Convulsionaires have borne daily from six to eight thousand blows, thus inflicted, without danger[1]. One Secourist administered to a young woman, who was suffering under spasm of the stomach, the most violent blows on that part, not to mention other similar cases, which occurred every where in great numbers. Sometimes the patients bounded from the ground, impelled by the convulsions, like fish when out of water; and this was so frequently imitated at a later period.

[1] This kind of assistance was called the "Grands Secours." *Bourrier*, Mémoire Théologique sur ce qu'on appelle les Secours violens dans les Convulsions. Paris, 1788, 12mo. Many Convulsionaires were seized with illness in consequence of this singularly erroneous mode of cure. A Dominican friar died from the effects of it—though accidents of this kind were kept carefully concealed. See *Renault*, parish priest at Vaux, near Auxerre (Abbé, 1736), Le Secourisme détruit dans ses fondemens, 1753, 12mo, and Le Mystère d'Iniquité, 1788, 8vo.

that the women and girls, when they expected such violent contortions, not wishing to appear indecent, put on gowns, made like sacks, closed at the feet. If they received any bruises by falling down, they were healed with earth from the grave of the uncanonized saint. They usually, however, showed great agility in this respect, and it is scarcely necessary to remark that the female sex especially was distinguished by all kinds of leaping, and almost inconceivable contortions of body. Some spun round on their feet with incredible rapidity, as is related of the dervishes; others ran their heads against walls, or curved their bodies like rope-dancers, so that their heels touched their shoulders.

All this degenerated at length into decided insanity. A certain Convulsionaire, at Vernon, who had formerly led rather a loose course of life, employed herself in confessing the other sex; in other places women of this sect were seen imposing exercises of

penance on priests, during which these were compelled to kneel before them. Others played with children's rattles, or drew about small carts, and gave to these childish acts symbolical significations [1]. One Convulsionaire even made believe to shave her chin and give religious instruction at the same time, in order to imitate Pâris, the worker of miracles, who, during this operation, and whilst at table, was in the habit of preaching. Some had a board placed across their bodies, upon which a whole row of men stood; and, as in this unnatural state of mind a kind of pleasure is derived from excruciating pain, some too were seen who caused their bosoms to be pinched with tongs, while others, with gowns closed at the feet, stood upon their heads, and remained in that po-

[1] *Arouet*, the father of *Voltaire*, visited, in Nantes, a celebrated Convulsionaire, *Gabrielle Mollet*, whom he found occupied in pulling the bells off a child's coral, to designate the rejection of the unbelievers. Sometimes she jumped into the water, and barked like a dog. She died in 1748.

sition longer than would have been possible had they been in health. Pinault, the advocate, who belonged to this sect, barked like a dog some hours every day, and even this found imitation among the believers.

The insanity of the Convulsionaires lasted, without interruption, until the year 1790, and, during these fifty-nine years, called forth more lamentable phenomena than the enlightened spirits of the eighteenth century would be willing to allow. The grossest immorality found, in the secret meetings of the believers, a sure sanctuary, and, in their bewildering devotional exercises, a convenient cloak. It was of no avail that, in the year 1762, the Grands Secours were forbidden by act of parliament; for thenceforth this work was carried on in secrecy, and with greater zeal than ever; it was in vain, too, that some physicians, and, among the rest, the austere, pious Hecquet[1], and

[1] *J. Phil. Hecquet* (obiit 1737). Le Naturalisme des Convulsions. Soleure, 1733. 8vo.

after him Lorry [1], attributed the conduct of the Convulsionaires to natural causes. Men of distinction among the upper classes, as, for instance, Montgeron the deputy, and Lambert an ecclesiastic (obt. 1813), stood forth as the defenders of this sect; and the numerous writings [2] which were exchanged on the subject, served, by the importance which they thus attached to it, to give it stability. The revolution, finally, shook the structure of this pernicious mysticism. It was not, however, destroyed; for, even during the period of the greatest excitement, the secret meetings were still kept up; prophetic books, by Convulsionaires of various denominations, have appeared even in the most recent times, and only a few years ago (in 1828) this once celebrated sect still existed, although without the convulsions and the extraordinarily rude aid of the brethren of the faith, which, amidst the boasted pre-emi-

[1] De Melancholia et Morbis Melancholicis. Paris, 1765. 2 vols. 8vo.

[2] Especially from 1734 to 1735.

nence of French intellectual advancement, remind us most forcibly of the dark ages of the St. John's dancers [1].

6. Similar fanatical sects exhibit among all nations [2] of ancient and modern times the

[1] See *Grégoire*, Histoire des Sectes Religieuses, tome ii. ch. 13. p. 127. Paris, 1828. 8vo. The following words of this meritorious author, on the mental state of his countrymen, are very well worthy of attention. " L'esprit public est dans un état de fluctuation persévérante : *des âmes flétries par l'égoïsme n'ont que le caractère de la servitude ;* l'education viciée ne forme guère que des êtres dégradés ; la religion est méconnue ou mal enseignée ; *la nation présente des symptômes alarmans de sa décrépitude*, et présage des malheurs dont on ne peut calculer l'étendue ni la durée." P. 161.

[2] (Translator's note.) " I had occasion to witness at Cairo another species of religious fanaticism. I heard one day, at a short distance from my residence, for several hours together, singing, or more properly crying, so uniform and fatiguing, that I inquired the cause of this singularity. I was told that it was some dervise or monk, who repeated, while *dancing* on his heels, the name of Allah, till, completely exhausted, he sunk down insensible. These unhappy visionaries, in fact, often expire at the end of this holy *dance ;* and the cries of the one whom I heard, having commenced in the

same phenomena. An overstrained bigotry is, in itself, and considered in a medical

afternoon, and continued during the whole of the night, and part of the following morning, I doubt not that his pious enthusiasm cost him his life."—*Recollections of Egypt, by the Baroness Von Minutoli.* London, 1827.

In Arabia the same fanatical zeal exists, as we find from the following passage of an anonymous history of the Wahabis, published in Paris, in 1810: " La prière la plus méritoire consiste à crier le nom de Dieu, pendant des heures entières, et le plus saint est celui qui répète ce nom le plus long temps et le plus vite. Rien de plus curieux que le spectacle des Schekhs, qui, dans les fêtes publiques, s'essayent à l'envi, et hurlent le nom d'Allah d'une manière effrayante. La plupart enroués sont forcés de se taire, et abandonnent la palme au saint à forte poitrine, qui, pour jouir de sa victoire, s'efforce et jette encore quelque cris devant ses rivaux réduits au silence. Epuisé de fatigue, baigné de sueur, il tombe enfin au milieu du peuple dévot, qui s'empresse à le relever et le porte en triomphe. Les principales mosquées retentissent, tous les Vendredis, des cris dictés par cette singulière émulation. Le Schekh, que ses poumons ont sanctifié, conserve son odeur de sainteté par des extases et des transports, souvent dangereux pour les Chrétiens que le hazard en rend témoins malgré eux."

point of view, a destructive irritation of the senses, which draws men away from the efficiency of mental freedom, and peculiarly favours the most injurious emotions. Sensual ebullitions, with strong convulsions of the nerves, appear sooner or later [1], and insanity, suicidal disgust of life, and incurable nervous disorders [2], are but too frequently the consequences of a perverse, and, indeed, hypocritical zeal, which has ever prevailed, as well in the assemblies of the Mænades and Corybantes of antiquity, as under the semblance of religion among the Christians and Mahomedans.

There are some denominations of English Methodists which surpass, if possible, the French Convulsionaires; and we may here mention, in particular, the Jumpers,

[1] For examples see *Osiander*, Entwickelungskrankheiten. Loc. cit. p. 45.

[2] Among 108 cases of insanity, *Perfect* mentions eleven of mania and methodistical enthusiasm, *in nine of which suicide was committed.* Annals of Insanity. London, 1808. 8vo.

among whom it is still more difficult to draw the line between religious ecstacy and a perfect disorder of the nerves, than in the example given above; sympathy, however, operates perhaps more perniciously on them than on other fanatical assemblies. The sect of Jumpers was founded in the year 1760, in the county of Cornwall, by two fanatics[1], who were, even at that time, able to collect together a considerable party. Their general doctrine is that of the Methodists, and claims our consideration here, only in so far as it enjoins them, during their devotional exercises, to fall into convulsions, which they are able to effect in the strangest manner imaginable. By the use of certain unmeaning words, they work themselves up into a state of religious frenzy, in which they seem to have scarcely any control over their senses. They then begin to jump with strange gestures, repeating this exercise with all their might, until they are ex-

[1] *Harris Rowland* and *William Williams.*

hausted, so that it not unfrequently happens that women, who, like the Mænades, practise these religious exercises, are carried away from the midst of them in a state of syncope, whilst the remaining members of the congregations, for miles together, on their way home, terrify those whom they meet by the sight of such demoniacal ravings. There are never more than a few ecstatics, who, by their example, excite the rest to jump, and these are followed by the greatest part of the meeting, so that these assemblages of the Jumpers resemble, for hours together, the wildest orgies, rather than congregations met for Christian edification[1].

In the United States of North America, communities of Methodists have existed for the last sixty years. The reports of credible witnesses of their assemblages for divine

[1] *John Evans*, Sketch of the Denominations of the Christian World. 13th edition. London, 1814. 12mo. p. 236.—See *Grégoire*. Loc. cit. tome iv. chap. xiii. p. 483.

service in the open air (camp-meetings)[1], to which many thousands flock from great distances,[2] surpass, indeed, all belief; for not only do they there repeat all the insane acts of the French Convulsionaires and of the English Jumpers, but the disorder of their minds and of their nerves attains, at these meetings, a still greater height. Women have been seen to miscarry whilst suffering under the state of ecstacy and violent spasms into which they are thrown, and others have publicly stripped themselves and jumped into the rivers. They have swooned away[3] by hun-

[1] (Translator's note.) *Mrs. Trollope's* Domestic Manners of the Americans. A Revival, p. 108—112. Shaking Quakers, p. 195, 196. Camp Meeting, p. 233. London, 2 vols. 1832.

[2] In Kentucky assemblies of from ten to twelve thousand have frequently taken place. Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and New York, are also the theatres of these meetings.—*Grégoire*, tome iv. p. 496.

[3] At one of these camp-meetings a traveller saw above eight hundred persons faint away. Idem. He nowhere met with more frequent instances of suicide in consequence of Demonomania, than in North America.

dreds, worn out with ravings and fits; and of the Barkers, who appeared among the Convulsionaires only here and there, in single cases of complete aberration of intellect, whole bands are seen running on all fours, and growling[1] as if they wished to indicate, even by their outward form, the shocking degradation of their human nature. At these camp-meetings the children are witnesses of this mad infatuation, and as their weak nerves are, with the greatest facility, affected by sympathy, they, together with their parents, fall into violent fits, though they know nothing of their import, and many of them retain for life some severe nervous disorder, which, having arisen from fright and excessive

[1] Idem. p. 498. These are the *Barkers*. Numerous other convulsive Methodistical sects abound in North America. The *Shakers*, who are inimical to marriage, would also have been mentioned, were not their contortions much less violent than those of the Jumpers.—See *Grégoire*, tome v. p. 195. *Evans*, p. 267.

excitement, will not afterwards yield to any medical treatment[1].

But enough of these extravagances, which, even in our own days, embitter the lives of so many thousands, and exhibit to the world, in the nineteenth century, the same terrific form of mental disturbance as the St. Vitus's dance once did to the benighted nations of the middle ages.

[1] See *Perrin du Lac*, Voyage dans les deux Louisianes. Paris, 1805. 8vo. chap. ix. p. 64, 65. chap. xvii. p. 128, 129.—*Michaud*, Voyage à l'ouest des Monts Alleghanys. Paris, 1804. 8vo. p. 212.—*John Melish*, Travels in the United States of America. Philadelphia, 1812. 8vo. vol. i. p. 26.—*Lambert*, Travels through Canada and the United States. London, 1810. 8vo. vol. iii. p. 44.—*John Howison*, Sketches of Upper Canada. Edinburgh, 1822. 8vo. p. 150.—*Edward Allen Talbot*, Cinq Années de Résidence au Canada. Paris, 1825. 8vo. tome ii. p. 147.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

I.

Petri de Herentals, Prioris Floreffiensis Vita *Gregorii XI.*, in *Stephan. Baluzii* Vitæ Paparum Avenionensium. T. I. Paris, 1693. 4*to p.* 483.

Ejus tempore, videlicet A. D. MCCCLXXV mira secta tam virorum quam mulierum venit Aquisgrani de partibus Alamanniæ, et ascendit usque Hanoniam seu Franciam, cujus talis fuit conditio. Nam homines utriusque sexus illudebantur a dæmonio, taliter quod tam in domibus quam in plateis et in Ecclesiis se invicem manibus tenentes chorizabant et in altum saltabant, ac quædam nomina dæmoniorum nominabant, videlicet *Friskes* et similia, nullam cognitionem in hujusmodi chorizatione nec verecundiam sui propter astantes populos habentes. Et in fine hujus chorizationis in tantum circa pectoralia torquebantur, quod nisi mappulis lineis a suis amicis per medium ventris fortiter stringerentur, quasi furiose clamabant se mori. Hi vero in Leodio per conjurationes sumptas de illis quæ in cate-

chismo ante baptismum fiunt, a dæmonio liberabantur, et sanati dicebant, quod videbatur eis *quod in hora hujus chorizationis erant in fluvio sanguinis, et propterea sic in altum saltabant*. Vulgus autem apud Leodium dicebat quod hujusmodi plaga populo contigisset eo quod populus male baptizatus erat, maxime a Presbyteribus suas tenentibus concubinas. Et propter hoc proposuerat vulgus insurgere in clerum, eos occidendo et bona eorum diripiendo, nisi Deus de remedio providisset per conjurationes prædictas. Quo viso cessavit tempestas vulgi taliter quod clerus multo plus a populo fuit honoratus. De ista autem chorizatione seu secta talia extant rigmata:

Oritur in seculo nova quædam secta
In gestis aut in speculo visa plus nec lecta.
Populus tripudiat nimium saltando.
Se unus alteri sociat leviter clamando.
Frisch friskes cum gaudio clamat uterque sexus
Cunctus manutergio et baculo connexus.
Capite fert pelleum desuper sertum.
Cernit Mariæ filium et cælum apertum.
Deorsum prosternitur. Dudum fit ululatus.
Calcato ventre cernitur statim liberatus.
Vagatur loca varia pompose vivendo.
Mendicat necessaria propriis parcendo.
Spernit videre rubea et personam flentem.
Ad fidei contraria erigit hic gens mentem.
Noctis sub umbraculo ista perpetravit.
Cum naturali baculo subtus se calcavit.

Clerum habet odio. Non curat sacramenta.
Post sunt in Leodio remedia inventa,
Hanc nam fraudem qua suggessit sathan est convictus.
Conjuratus evanescit. Hinc sit Christus benedictus.

II.

Jo. Pistorii Rerum familiarumque Belgicarum Chronicon magnum. Francof. 1654. *fol. p.* 319. De chorisantibus.

Item Anno Dn. MCCCLXXIV. tempore pontificatus venerabilis Domini Joannis de Arckel Episcopi Leodiensis, in mense Julio in crastino divisionis Apostolorum visi sunt dansatores scilicet chorisantes, qui postea venerunt Trajectum, Leodium, Tungrim et alia loca istarum partium in mense Septembri. Et cœpit hæc *dæmoniaca pestis* vexare in dictis locis et circumvicinis masculos et fœminas maxime pauperes et levis opinionis ad magnum omnium terrorem; pauci clericorum vel divitum sunt vexati. Serta in capitibus gestabant, circa ventrem mappa cum baculo se stringebant circa umbilicum, ubi post saltationem cadentes nimium torquebantur, et ne creparentur pedibus conculcabantur, vel contra creporem cum baculo ad mappam duriter se ligabant, vel cum pugno se trudi faciebant, rostra calceorum aliqui clamabant se abhorrere, unde in Leodio fieri tunc vetabantur. Ecclesias chorisando occupabant,

et crescebant numerose de mense Septembri et Octobri, processiones fiebant ubique, litaniæ et missæ speciales. Leodii apud Sanctam crucem scholaris servitor in vesperis dedicationis, cœpit ludere cum thuribulo, et post vesperas fortiter saltare. Evocatus a pluribus, ut diceret Pater noster, noluit, et Credo respondit in diabolum. Quod videns capellanus, allata stola conjuravit eum per exorcismum baptizandorum, et statim dixit: Ecce inquit, scholaris recedit cum parva toga et calceis rostratis. Dic, tunc inquit, Pater noster et Credo. At ille utrumque dixit perfecte et curatus est. Apud Harstallium uno mane ante omnium Sanctorum, multi eorum ibi congregati consilium habuerunt, ut pariter venientes omnes canonicos, presbyteres et clericos Leodienses occiderent. Canonicus quidam parvæ mensæ minister Simon in claustro Leodiensi apud capellam Beatæ virginis, in Deo confortatus, scalam projecit in collum unius, dicens Evangelium: In principio erat verbum, super caput ejus, et per hoc fuit liberatus, et pro miraculo statim fuit pulsatum. Apud S. Bartolomæum Leodii, præsentibus multis, cuidam alii exorcisanti respondit dæmon: Ego exibo libenter. Expecta, inquit presbyter, volo tibi loqui. Et postquam aliquos alios curasset, dixit illi, loquere tu personaliter et responde mihi. Tum solus respondit dæmon: Nos eramus duo, sed socius meus nequior me, ante me exivit, habui tot pati in hoc corpore si essem extra, nunquam intrarem in corpus Christianum. Cui presbyter: Quare intrasti corpora talium personarum? Respondit: Clerici et presbyteres dicunt

tot pulchra verba et tot orationes, ut non possemus intrare corpora ipsorum. Si adhuc fuisset expectatum per quindenam vel mensem, nos intrassemus corpora divitum, et postea principum, et sic per eos destruxissemus clerum. Et hæc fuerunt ibi a multis audita et postea a multis narrata. Hæc pestis intra annum satis invaluit, sed postea per tres aut quatuor annos omnino cessavit.

III. [1]

Die Limburger Chronik, herausgegeben von *C. D. Vogel.* Marburg, 1828, *8vo. s.* 71.

Anno 1374 zu mitten im Sommer, da erhub sich ein wunderlich Ding auff Erdreich, und sonderlich in Teutschen Landen, auff dem Rhein und auff der Mosel, also dass Leute anhuben zu tantzen und zu rasen, und stunden je zwey gegen ein, und tantzeten auff einer Stätte einen halben Tag, und in dem Tantz da fielen sie etwan offt nieder, und liessen sich mit Füssen tretten auff ihren Leib. Davon nahmen sie sich an, dass sie genesen wären. Und lieffen von einer Stadt zu der andern, und von einer Kirchen zu der andern, und huben Geld auff von den Leuten, wo es ihnen mocht

[1] The substance of Nos. III. and IV. having been embodied in the text, it seems only necessary to insert here the original old German, which is couched in language too coarse to admit of translation.

gewerden. Und wurd des Dings also viel, dass man zu Cölln in der Stadt mehr dann fünff hundert Täntzer fand. Und fand man, dass es eine Ketzerey war, und geschahe um Golds willen, dass ihr ein Theil Frau und Mann in Unkeuschheit mochten kommen, und die vollbringen. Und fand man da zu Cölln mehr dann hundert Frauen und Dienstmägde, die nicht eheliche Männer hatten. Die wurden alle in der Täntzerey Kinder-tragend, und wann dass sie tantzeten, so bunden und knebelten sie sich hart um den Leib, dass sie desto geringer wären. Hierauff sprachen ein Theils Meister, sonderlich der guten Artzt, dass ein Theil wurden tantzend, die von heisser Natur wären, und von andern gebrechlichen natürlichen Sachen. Dann deren war wenig, denen das geschahe. Die Meister von der heiligen Schrift, die beschwohren der Täntzer ein Theil, die meynten, dass sie besessen wären von dem bösen Geist. Also nahm es ein betrogen End, und währete wohl sechszehn Wochen in diesen Landen oder in der Mass. Auch nahmen die vorgenannten Täntzer Mann und Frauen sich an, dass sie kein roth sehen möchten. Und war ein eitel Teuscherey, und ist verbottschaft gewesen an Christum nach meinem Bedünken.

IV.

Die Chronica van der hilliger Stat van Coellen. A. D. MCCCLXXIV. fol. 277. Coellen, 1499. fol.

In dem seluen iair stonde eyn groisse kranckheit vp vnder den mynschen, ind was doch niet vill me gesyen dese selue kranckheit vur off nae ind quam van natuerlichen ursachen as die meyster schrijuen, ind noemen Sij maniam, dat is raserie off unsynnicheit. Ind vill lude beyde man ind frauwen junck ind alt hadden die kranckheit. Ind gyngen vyss huyss ind hoff, dat deden ouch junge meyde, die verliessen yr alderen, vrunde ind maege ind lantschaff. Disse vurss mynschen zo etzlichen tzijden as Sij die kranckheit anstiesse, so hadden Sij eyn wonderlich bewegung yrre lychamen. Sij gauen vyss kryschende vnd grusame stymme, ind mit dem wurpen Sij sich haestlich up die erden, vnd gyngen liggen up yren rugge, ind beyde man ind vrauwen moist men vmb yren buych ind vmp lenden gurdelen vnd kneuelen mit twelen vnd mit starcken breyden benden, asso stijff vnd harte als men mochte.

Item asso gegurt mit den twelen dantzten Sij in kyrchen ind in clusen ind vp allen gewijeden steden. As Sij dantzten, so sprungen Sij allit vp ind rieffen, *Here sent Johan, so so, vrisch ind vro here sent Johan.*

Item die ghene die die kranckheit hadden wurden gemeynlichen gesunt bynnen. VV. dagen. Zom lesten geschiede vill bouerie vnd droch dae mit. Eyndeyll nae-

men sich an dat Sij kranck weren. vp dat Sij mochten gelt dae durch bedelen. Die anderen vinsden sich kranck vp dat Sij mochten vnkuyschheit bedrijuen mit den vrauwen. jnd gyngen durch alle lant ind dreuen vill bouerie. Doch zo lesten brach idt vyss ind wurden verdreuen vyss den landen. Die selue dentzer quamen ouch zo Coellen tusschen tzwen vnser lieuen frauwen missen Assumptionis ind Natiuitatis.

V.

In the third volume of the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, p. 434, there is an account of "some convulsive diseases in certain parts of Scotland," which is taken from Sir J. Sinclair's statistical account, and from which I have thought it illustrative of our author's subject to make some extracts; the first that is noticed is peculiar to a part of Forfarshire, and is called the leaping ague, which bears so close an analogy to the original St. Vitus's Dance or to Tarantism, that it seems to want only the "foul fiend," or the dreaded bite, as a cause, and a Scotch reel or strathspey as a cure, to render the resemblance quite complete. "Those affected with it first complain of a pain in the head, or lower part of the back, to which succeed convulsive fits, or *fits of dancing*, at certain periods. During the paroxysm they have all the appearance of madness, distorting

their bodies in various ways, and leaping and springing in a surprising manner, whence the disease has derived its vulgar name. Sometimes they run with astonishing velocity, and often over dangerous passes, to some place out of doors, which they have fixed on in their own minds, or, perhaps, even mentioned to those in company with them, and then *drop down quite exhausted.* At other times, especially when confined to the house, they climb in the most singular manner. In cottages, for example, they leap from the floor to what is called the baulks, or those beams by which the rafters are joined together, springing from one to another with the agility of a cat, or whirling round one of them, with a motion resembling the fly of a jack. Cold bathing is found to be the most effectual remedy; but when the fit of dancing, leaping, or running comes on, *nothing tends so much to abate the violence of the disease, as allowing them free scope to exercise themselves, till nature be exhausted.* No mention is made of its being peculiar to any age, sex, or condition of life, although I am informed by a gentleman from Brechin, that it is most common before puberty. In some families it seems to be hereditary; and I have heard of one, in which a horse was always kept ready saddled, to follow the young ladies belonging to it, when they were seized with a fit of running. It was first observed in the parish of Kenmuir, and has prevailed occasionally in that and the neighbouring parishes, for about seventy years: but is not now nearly so frequent as it was about thirty

years ago. The history of this singular affection is still extremely imperfect; and it is only from some of the medical practitioners in that part of the country where it prevails, that a complete description can be expected."

Our author has already noticed the convulsive disease prevalent in the Shetland Islands, and has quoted Hibbert's account of it. The following, however, from a very valuable manuscript account of the Orkney and Shetland Islands, drawn up about 1774, by George Low, with notes, by Mr. Pennant, is given in the Journal already cited, and will be read with interest. The facts were communicated to Mr. Low by the Rev. Wm. Archibald, parochial clergyman of Unst, the most northerly of the Shetlands.

"There is a most shocking distemper, which has of late years prevailed very much, especially among young women, and was hardly known thirty or forty years ago. About that period only one person was subject to it. The inhabitants gave it the name of convulsion fits; and, indeed, in appearance, it something resembles epilepsy. In its first rise, it began with a palpitation of the heart, of which they complained for a considerable time; it at length produced swooning fits, in which people seized with it would lie motionless upwards of an hour. At length, as the distemper gathered strength, when any violent passion seized, or on a sudden surprise, they would all at once fall down, toss their arms about, with their bodies, into many odd shapes, crying out all the

while, most dismally, throwing their heads about from side to side, with their eyes fixed and staring. At first, this distemper obtained, in a private way, with one female, but she being seized in a public way, at church, the disease was communicated to others; but, whether by the influence of *fear* or *sympathy*, is not easy to determine. However this was, our public assemblies, especially at church, became greatly disturbed by their outcries. This distemper always prevails most violently during the summer time, in which season, for many years, we are hardly one sabbath free. In these few years past, it has not prevailed so extensively, and upon the whole, seems on the decline. One thing remarkable in this distemper is, that as soon as the fit is over, the persons affected with it are generally as lively and brisk as before; and if it happens at any of their public diversions, as soon as they revive, they mix with their companions, and continue their amusement as vigorously as if nothing had happened. Few men are troubled with this distemper, which seems more confined to women; but there are instances of its seizing men, and girls of six years of age. With respect to the nature of this disease, people who have made inquiry about it differ, but most imagine it hysterical; however, this seems not entirely the case, as men and children are subject to it; however, it is a new disease in Shetland, but whence imported, none can imagine."

"When the statistical account of this parish was published, this awful and afflicting disease was becoming

daily less common. In the parishes of Aithsting, Sandsting, and Northmaven, in which it was once very frequent, it was now totally extinct. In the last of these the cure is said to have been effected by a very singular remedy, which, if true, and there seems no reason to doubt it, shows the influence of moral causes in removing, as well as in inducing, convulsive disorders." The cure is attributed to a rough fellow of a kirk officer, who tossed a woman in that state, with whom he had been frequently troubled, into a ditch of water. She was never known to have the disease afterwards, and others dreaded the same treatment.

It, however, still prevails in some of the northern parishes, particularly in Delting, although, according to the description given of it, with some alteration in its symptoms.

"Convulsion fits of a very extraordinary kind seem peculiar to this country. The patient is first seized with something like fainting, and immediately after utters wild cries and shrieks, the sound of which, at whatever distance, immediately puts all who are subject to the disorder in the same situation. It most commonly attacks them when the church is crowded, and often interrupts the service in this and many other churches in the country. On a sacramental occasion, fifty or sixty are sometimes carried out of the church, and laid in the church-yard, where they struggle and roar with all their strength, for five or ten minutes, and then rise up without recollecting a single circumstance that

happened to them, or being in the least hurt or fatigued with the violent exertions they had made during the fit. One observation occurs on this disorder, that, during the late scarce years it was very uncommon, and, during the two last years of plenty (1791), it has appeared more frequently.

"Similar instances of epidemical convulsions are already upon record; but the history of that which occurred in Anglesea, North Wales, is the most remarkable, as its progress was, in all probability, checked by the judicious precautions recommended by Dr. Haygarth.

"In 1796, on the estates of the Earl of Uxbridge and Holland Griffith, Esq., twenty-three females, from ten to 25, and one boy, of about 17 years of age, who had all intercourse with each other, were seized with an unusual kind of convulsions, affecting only the upper extremities. It began with pain of the head, and sometimes of the stomach and side, not very violent; after which there came on violent twitchings or convulsions of the upper extremities, continuing, with little intermission, and causing the shoulders almost to meet by the exertion. In bed the disorder was not so violent: but, in some cases at least, it continued even during sleep. Their pulse was moderate, the body costive, and the general health not much impaired. In general they had a hiccough; and, when the convulsions were most violent, giddiness came on, with the loss of hearing and recollection. During their convalescence, and they all

recovered, the least fright or sudden alarm, brought on a slight paroxysm.

"Dr. Haygarth, who was consulted on the means of relieving these unfortunate people, successfully recommended the use of antispasmodics; that all girls and young women should be prevented from having any communication with persons affected with those convulsions; and that those who were ill should be kept separate as much as possible."

The same paper from which the above extracts have been taken, quotes a remarkable instance in which religious enthusiasm was the exciting cause of a convulsive disease analogous to those already noticed. The account is given by the Rev. Dr. Meik, at great length. It appears, that in January 1742, about ninety persons in the parish of Cambuslang, in Lanarkshire, were induced to subscribe a petition to the minister, urging him to give them a weekly lecture, to which he readily assented. Nothing particular occurred at the first two lectures, but, at the third, to which the hearers had been very attentive, when the minister, in his last prayer, expressed himself thus, "Lord, who hath believed our report; and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? — where are the fruits of my poor labours among this people?" several persons in the congregation cried out publicly, and about fifty men and women came to the minister's house, expressing strong convictions of sin, and alarming fears of punishment. After this period, so many people from the neighbourhood

resorted to Cambuslang, that the minister thought himself obliged to provide them with daily sermons or exhortations, and actually did so for seven or eight months. The way in which the converts were affected, for it seems they were affected much in the same way, though in very different degrees, is thus described. "They were seized, all at once, commonly by something said in the sermons or prayers, with the most dreadful apprehensions, concerning the state of their souls, insomuch that many of them could not abstain from crying out, in the most public and frightful manner, 'bewailing their lost and undone condition by nature; calling themselves enemies to God, and despisers of precious Christ; declaring that they were unworthy to live on the face of the earth; that they saw the mouth of hell open to receive them, and that they heard the shrieks of the damned;' but the universal cry was, 'what shall we do to be saved?' The agony under which they laboured, was expressed, not only by words, but also by violent agitations of body; by clapping their hands and beating their breasts; by shaking and trembling; by faintings and convulsions; and sometimes by excessive bleeding at the nose. While they were in this distress, the minister often called out to them, not to stifle or smother their convictions, but to encourage them: and, after sermon was ended, he retired with them to the manse, and frequently spent the best part of the night with them in exhortations and prayers. Next day, before sermon began, they were brought out, and,

having napkins tied round their heads, were placed altogether on seats before the tents, where they remained sobbing, weeping, and often crying aloud, till the service was over. Some of those who fell under conviction were never converted; but most of those who fell under it were converted in a few days, and sometimes in a few hours. In most cases their conversion was as sudden and unexpected as their conviction. They were raised all at once from the lowest depth of sorrow and distress, to the highest pitch of joy and happiness; crying out with triumph and exultation, 'that they had overcome the wicked one; that they had gotten hold of Christ, and would never let him go; that the black cloud, which had hitherto concealed him from their view, was now dispelled; and that they saw him, with a pen in his hand, blotting out their sins.' Under these delightful impressions, some began to pray, and exhort publicly, and others desired the congregation to join with them in singing a particular psalm, which they said God had commanded them to sing. From the time of their conviction to their conversion, many had no appetite for food, or inclination to sleep, and all complained of their sufferings during that interval."

The following account, which closes the paper whence the above quotations have been extracted, is taken from an Inaugural Essay on Chorea Sancti Viti, by Felix Robertson of Tennessee, 8vo. Philadelph., 1805.

"The Chorea, which is more particularly the subject of this dissertation, made its appearance during the

summer of 1803, in the neighbourhood of Maryville, (Tennessee), in the form of an epidemic. Previously to entering on its history, I think it necessary to premise a few cursory remarks on the mode of life of those amongst whom it originated, for some time before the appearance of the disease.

"I suppose there are but few individuals in the United States, who have not at least heard of the unparalleled blaze of enthusiastic religion which burst forth in the western country, about the year 1800; but it is, perhaps, impossible to have a competent idea of its effects, without personal observation. This religious enthusiasm travelled like electricity, with astonishing velocity, and was felt, *almost instantaneously*, in every part of the states of Tennessee and Kentucky. It often proved so powerful a stimulus, that every other entirely lost its effect, or was but feebly felt. Hence that general neglect of earthly things, which was observed, and the almost perpetual attendance at places of public worship. Their churches are, in general, small and every way uncomfortable; the concourse of people, on days of worship, particularly of extraordinary meetings, was very numerous, and hundreds who lived at too great a distance to return home every evening, came supplied with provisions, tents, &c., for their sustenance and accommodation, during the continuance of the meeting, which commonly lasted from three to five days. They, as well as many others, remained on the spot day and night, the whole or greater part of this time, worship-

ing their Maker almost incessantly. The outward expressions of their worship consisted chiefly in alternate crying, laughing, singing, and shouting, and, at the same time, performing that variety of gesticulation, which the muscular system is capable of producing. It was under these circumstances that some found themselves unable, by voluntary efforts, to suppress the contraction of their muscles; and, to their own astonishment, and the diversion of many of the spectators, they continued to act from necessity, the curious character which they had commenced from choice.

" The disease no sooner appeared, than it spread with rapidity through the medium of the principle of imitation; thus it was not uncommon for an affected person to communicate it to the greater part of a crowd, who, from curiosity or other motives, had collected around him. It is at this time, in almost every part of Tennessee and Kentucky, and in various parts of Virginia, but is said not to be contagious (or readily communicated) as at its commencement. It attacks both sexes, and every constitution, but evidently more readily those who are enthusiasts in religion, such as those above described, and females; children of six years of age, and adults of sixty, have been known to have it, but a great majority of those affected are from fifteen to twenty-five. The muscles generally affected are those of the trunk, particularly of the neck, sometimes those of the superior extremities, but very rarely, if ever, those of the inferior. The contractions are sudden and violent, such as are denominated

convulsive, being sometimes so powerful, when in the muscles of the back, that the patient is thrown on the ground, where for some time, his motions more resemble those of a live fish, when thrown on land, than anything else to which I can compare them.

" This, however, does not often occur, and never, I believe, except at the commencement of the disease. The patients, in general, are capable of standing and walking, and many, after it has continued a short time, can attend to their business, provided it is not of a nature requiring much steadiness of body. They are incapable of conversing with any degree of satisfaction to themselves or company, being continually interrupted by those irregular contractions of their muscles, each causing a grunt, or forcible expiration; but the organs of speech do not appear to be affected, nor has it the least influence on the mind. They have no command over their actions by any effort of volition, nor does their lying in bed prevent them, but they always cease during sleep. This disease has remissions and exacerbations, which, however, observe no regularity in their occurrence or duration. During the intermission a paroxysm is often excited at the sight of a person affected, but more frequently by the common salute of shaking hands. The sensations of the patients in a paroxysm are generally agreeable, which the enthusiastic class often endeavour to express, by laughing, shouting, *dancing*, &c.

" Fatigue is almost always complained of after violent paroxysms, and sometimes a general soreness is experienced. The heart and arteries appear to be no further

affected by the disease, than what arises from the exercise of the body; nor does any change take place in any of the secretions or excretions. It has not proved mortal in a single instance within my knowledge, but becomes lighter by degrees, and finally disappears. In some cases, however, of long continuance, it is attended with some degree of melancholia, which seems to arise entirely from the patient's reflections, and not directly from the disease.

"The state of the atmosphere has no influence over it, as it rages with equal violence in summer and in winter; in moist and in dry air."

In the above examples, nervous disorders bearing a strong resemblance to those of the middle ages, are shown to exist in an *epidemic* form, both in Europe and America, at the present time; but in these instances some general cause of mental excitement, and none is more powerful than religious enthusiasm, seems to have been requisite for their propagation. Their appearance, however, in *single cases*, is occasionally independent of any such origin, which leads to a belief, not without support in the experiments of modern physiologists, that they occasionally proceed from physical causes, and that it is therefore not necessary to consider them in all cases as the offspring of a disordered imagination.

A well marked case of a disease approximating to the original Dancing Mania, is related by Mr. Kinder Wood, in the 7th volume of the Medico-chirurgical Transactions, p. 237. The patient, a young married woman, is described to have suffered from headache

and sickness, together with involuntary motions of the eyelids, and most extraordinary contortions of the trunk and extremities, for several days, when the more remarkable symptoms began to manifest themselves, which are thus recorded:—

"February 26. Slight motions of the limbs came on in bed. She arose at nine o'clock, after which they increased, and became unusually severe. She was hurled from side to side of the couch-chair upon which she sat, for a considerable time, without intermission; was sometimes instantaneously and forcibly thrown upon her feet, when she jumped and stamped violently. She had headach; the eyelids were frequently affected, and she had often a sudden propensity to spring or leap upwards. The affection ceased about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the patient being very much fatigued; but they returned about noon, and a third time in the afternoon, when she was impelled into every corner of the room, and began to strike the furniture and doors violently with the hand, as she passed near them, the sound of which afforded her great satisfaction. The fourth attack was at night; was very violent, and ended with sickness and vomiting. She went to bed at half-past eleven. Her nights were invariably good. The last three attacks were more violent than the former ones, but they continued only half an hour each.

"February 27. The attack commenced in bed, and was violent, but of short duration. When she arose about ten, she had a second attack, continuing an hour,

except an interval of five minutes. She now struck the furniture more violently and more repeatedly. Kneeling on one knee, with the hands upon the back, she often sprung up suddenly and struck the top of the room with the palm of the hand. To do this, she rose fifteen inches from the floor, so that the family were under the necessity of drawing all the nails and hooks from the ceiling. She frequently danced upon one leg, holding the other with the hand, and occasionally changing the legs. In the evening, the family observed the blows upon the furniture to be more continuous, and to assume the regular time and measure of a musical air. As a strain or series of strokes was concluded, she ended with a more violent stroke or a more violent spring or jump. Several of her friends also at this time noticed the regular measure of the strokes, and the greater regularity the disease was assuming; the motions being evidently affected, or in some measure modified by the strokes upon the surrounding bodies. She chiefly struck a small slender door, the top of a chest of drawers, the clock, a table, or a wooden skreen placed near the door. The affection ceased about nine o'clock, when the patient went to bed.

" February 28. She arose very well at eight. At half-past nine the motions recommenced; they were now of a more pleasant nature; the involuntary actions, instead of possessing their former irregularity and violence, being changed into a measured step over the room, connected with an air, or series of strokes, and she beat

upon the adjacent bodies as she passed them. In the commencement of the attack, the lips moved as if words were articulated, but no sound could be distinguished at this period. It was curious indeed to observe the patient at this time, moving around the room with all the vivacity of the country dance, or the graver step of the minuet, the arms frequently carried, not merely with ease, but with elegance. Occasionally all the steps were so directed as to place the foot constantly where the stone flags joined to form the floor, particularly when she looked downwards. When she looked upwards, there was an irresistible impulse to spring up to touch little spots or holes in the top of the ceiling; when she looked around, she had a similar propensity to dart the forefinger into little holes in the furniture, &c. One hole in the wooden skreen received the point of the forefinger many hundred times, which was suddenly and involuntarily darted into it with an amazing rapidity and precision. There was one particular part of the wall to which she frequently danced, and there placing herself with the back to it, stood two or three minutes. This by the family was called '*the measuring place.*'

"In the afternoon the motions returned, and proceeded much as in the morning. At this time a person present, surprised at the manner in which she beat upon the doors, &c., and thinking he recognised the air, without further ceremony began to sing the tune; the moment this struck her ears, she turned suddenly to the man, and dancing directly up to him, continued doing

so till he was out of breath. The man now ceased a short time, when commencing again, he continued till the attack stopped. The night before this, her father had mentioned his wish to procure a drum, associating this dance of his daughter with some idea of music. The avidity with which she danced to the tune when sung as above stated, confirmed this wish, and accordingly a drum and fife were procured in the evening. After two hours of rest, the motions again reappeared, when the drum and fife began to play the air to which she had danced before, viz. the 'Protestant Boys,' a favourite popular air in this neighbourhood. In whatever part of the room she happened to be, she immediately turned and danced up to the drum, and as close as possible to it, and there she danced till she missed the step, when the involuntary motions instantly ceased. The first time she missed the step in five minutes; but again rose, and danced to the drum two minutes and a half by her father's watch, when, missing the step, the motions instantly ceased. She rose a third time, and missing the step in half a minute, the motions immediately ceased. After this, the drum and fife commenced as the involuntary actions were coming on, and before she rose from her seat; and four times they completely checked the progress of the attack, so that she did not rise upon the floor to dance. At this period the affection ceased for the evening.

"March 1. She arose very well at half-past seven. Upon my visit this morning, the circumstances of the

preceding afternoon being stated, it appeared clear to me, that the attacks had been shortened. Slow as I had seen the effects of medicine in the comparatively trifling disease of young females, I was very willing that the family should pursue the experiment, whilst the medical means were continued.

" As I wished to see the effect of the instrument over the disease, I was sent for at noon, when I found her dancing to the drum, which she continued to do for half an hour without missing the step, owing to the slowness of the movement. As I sat counting the pulse, which I found to be 120, in the short intervals of an attack, I noticed motions of the lips, previous to the commencement of the dance, and placing my ear near the mouth I distinguished a tune. After the attack, of which this was the beginning, she informed me, in answer to my inquiry, that there always was a tune dwelling upon her mind, which at times becoming more pressing, irresistibly impelled her to commence the involuntary motions. The motions ceased at four o'clock.

" At half-past seven the motions commenced again, when I was sent for. There were two drummers present, and an unbraced drum was beaten till the other was braced. She danced regularly to the unbraced drum, but the moment the other commenced she instantly ceased. As missing the time stopped the affections, I wished the measure to be changed during the dance, which stopped the attack. It also ceased upon increasing the rapidity of the beat, till she could no

longer keep time; and it was truly surprising to see the rapidity and violence of the muscular exertion, in order to keep time with the increasing movement of the instrument. Five times I saw her sit down the same evening, at the instant that she was unable to keep the measure; and in consequence of this I desired the drummers to beat one continued roll, instead of a regular movement. She arose and danced five minutes, when both drums beat a continued roll; the motions instantly stopped, and the patient sat down. In a few minutes the motions commencing again, she was suffered to dance five minutes, when the drums again began to roll, the effect of which was instantaneous; the motions ceased, and the patient sat down. In a few minutes the same was repeated with the same effect. It appeared certain that the attacks could now be stopped in an instant, and I was desirous of arresting them entirely, and breaking the chain of irregular associations which constituted the disease. As the motions at this period always commenced in the fingers, and propagated themselves along the upper extremities to the trunk, I desired the drummers, when the patient arose to dance, to watch the commencement of the attack, and roll the drums before she arose from the chair. Six times successively the patient was hindered from rising, by attending to the commencement of the affection; and before leaving the house, I desired the family to attend to the commencement of the attacks, and use the drum early.

" March 2. She arose at seven o'clock, and the motions commenced at ten; she danced twice before the drummer was prepared, after which she attempted to dance again four several times; but one roll of a well-braced drum hindered the patient from leaving her seat, after which the attacks did not recur. She was left weakly and fatigued by the disease, but with a good appetite. In the evening of this day an eruption appeared, particularly about the elbows, in diffused patches of a bright red colour, which went off on the third day."

Other cases might be adduced (see 23d vol. of the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, p. 261.; 31st vol. of ditto, p. 299; 5th vol. of the Medico-Chirurgical Transactions, p. 1 to 23, &c.), but as there is none more striking than this, they would unnecessarily swell this number of the appendix, which has already extended to an undue length.

VI.

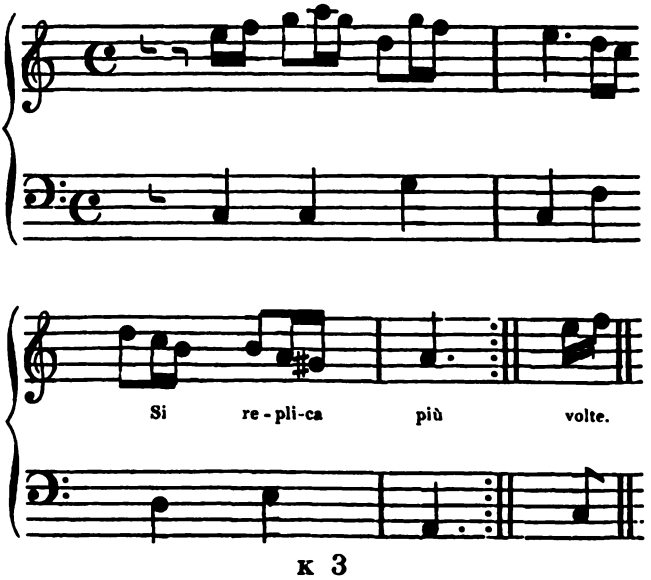
MUSIC FOR THE DANCE OF THE TARANTATI,

FROM

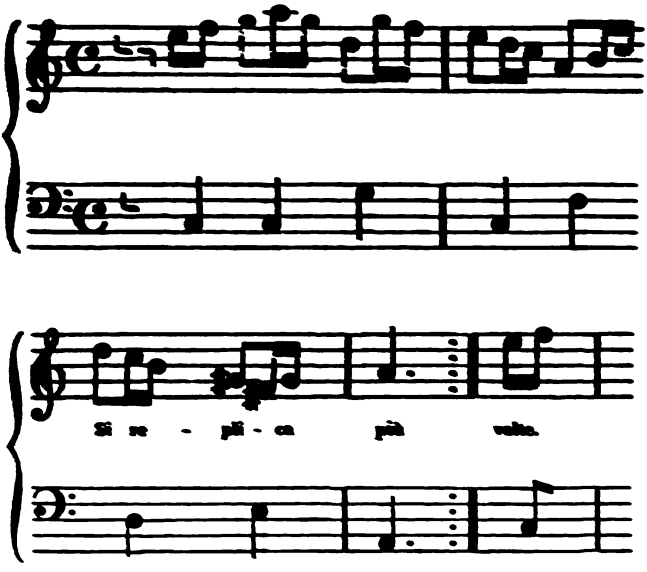
ATHAN. KIRCHER.

(*Magness. de Arte magnetica. Rom.* 1654. *fol. p.* 591.—*Repeated in Sam. Hafenreffer, Nosodochium, in quo cutis affectus traduntur. Ulm.* 1660. 8*vo. p.* 485.)

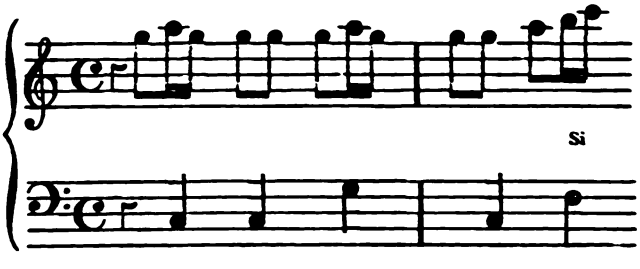
I. *Primus modus Tarentella.*

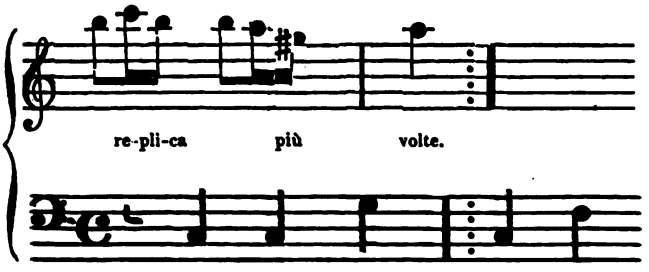


II. *Secundus modus.*

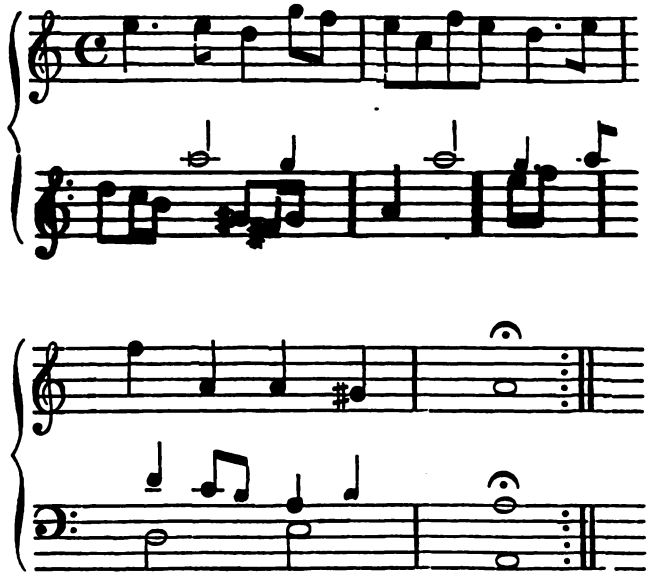


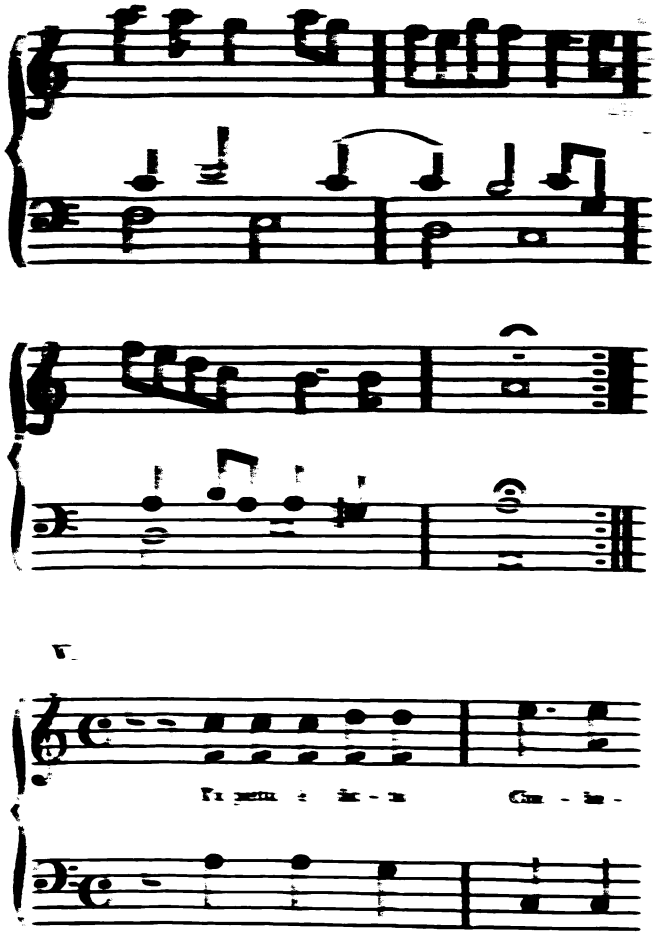
III. *Tertius modus.*

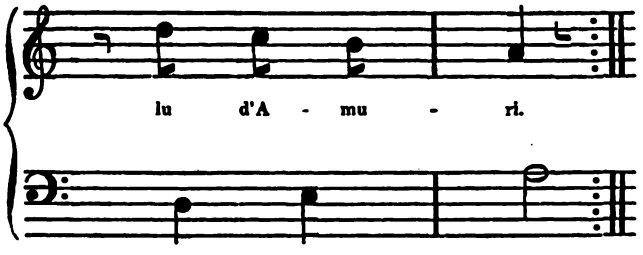




IV. *Antidotum Tarantulae.*





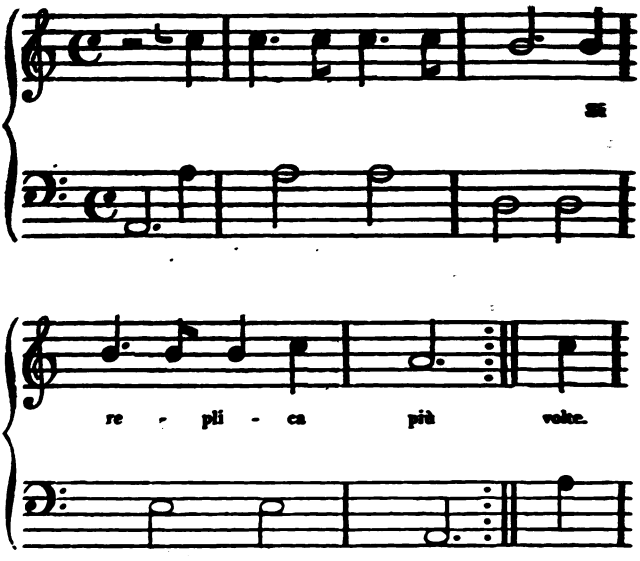


Stu pettu è fattu Cimbalu d'Amuri:
Tasti li sensi mobili, e accorti:
Cordi li chianti, sospiri, e duluri:
Rosa è lu Cori miu feritu à morti:
Strali è lu ferru, chiai so li miei arduri:
Marteddu è lu pensieri, e la mia sorti:
Mastra è la Donna mia, ch'à tutti l'huri
Cantando canta leta la mia morti.

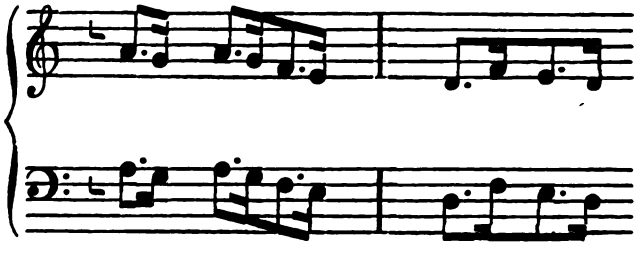
Some strophes, which are no longer extant, were usually sung between these and the following lines:—

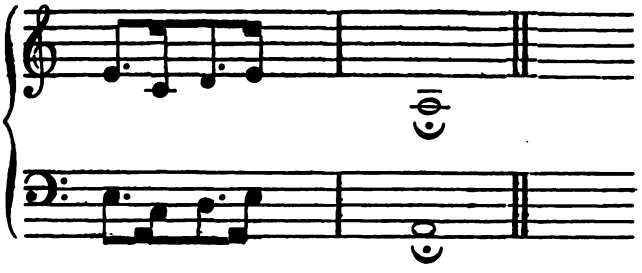
Allu mari mi portati,
Se voleti che mi sanati.
Allu mari, alla via:
Cosi m'ama la Donna mia.
Allu mari, allu mari:
Mentre campo, t'aggio amari.

VI. *Tarantella.*

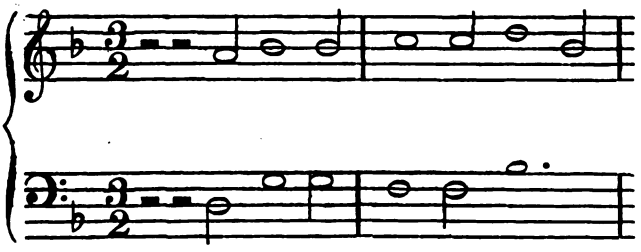


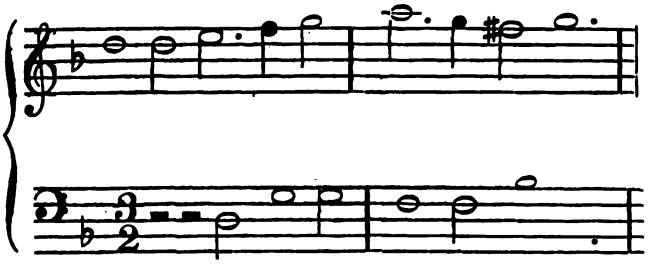
Ritornello.

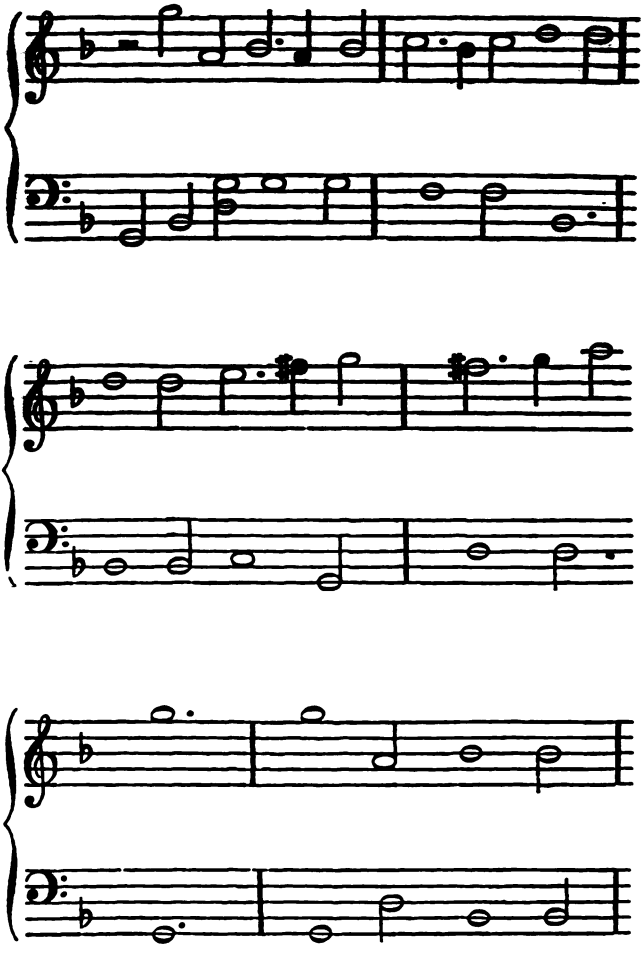


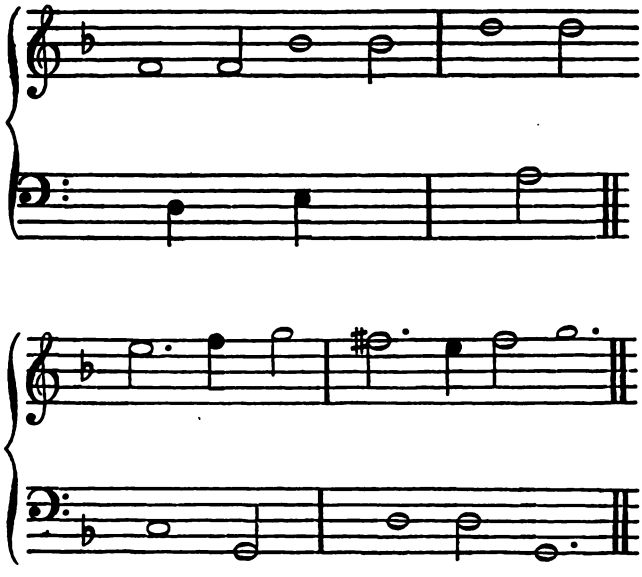


VII. *Tono hypodorio.*

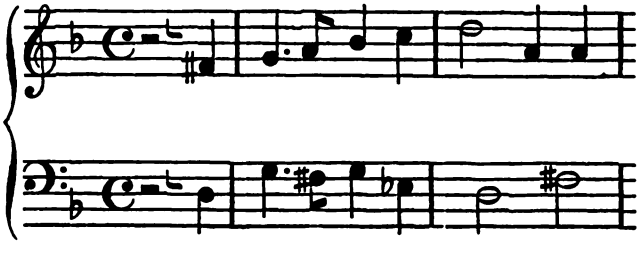


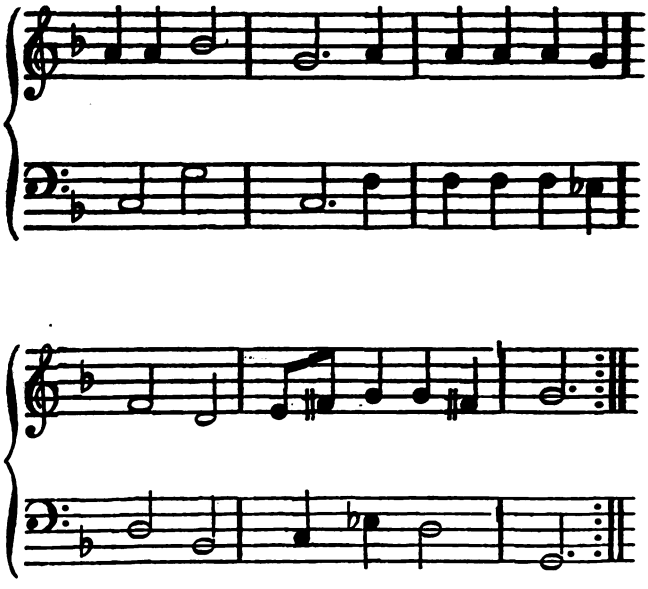






VIII. *Alia clausula.*





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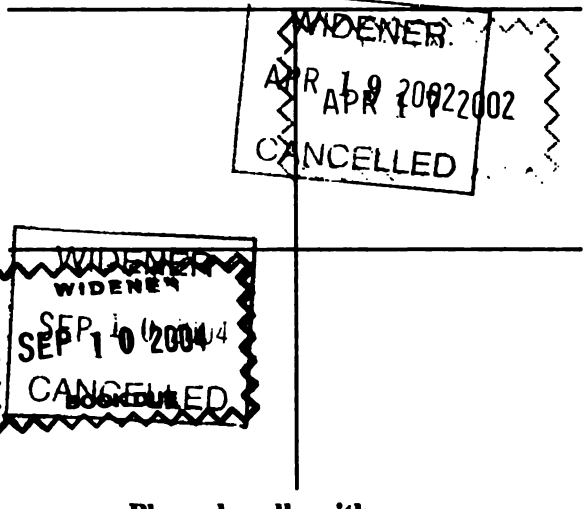

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